

THE RED SUN

A NOVEL

Bharat Jangam

O→3N47,1
N3

O→, 3N47, 1 6387
N3

Bharat Jangam
Red Sun

6387

❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

[illegible]

THE RED SUN

A NOVEL

Bharat Jangam

Translated from the Nepali by

Saroj Kumar Shakya

Publisher

INDU PRAKASHAN

Bharat Jangam

Jangam Niwas
Baneswor, Kathmandu.
Tel: 470488

Translators

From Nepali into English

Saroj Kumar Shakya
Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur
Nepal.

From Nepali into Hindi

Dr. Ram Dayal Rakesh
Baneswor, Kathmandu
Nepal.

Publisher

Indu Prakashan
Lahurabir, Varanasi
Tel: 53133

First Edition : 1993 April

© Bharat Jangam

Distributor

Awaz Prakashan
New Road, Kathmandu.
P.O.Box : 5388
Tel: 227180, 473041
Tlx: 2459 ANGROP-NP
Fax: 009771-227179

Typesetting:

Varanasi Computers

Lahurabir, Varanasi

Tel: 55288

Printed at:

Krishna Printers

Kamachcha, Varanasi

SRI JAGADGURU VISHWARADHYA
JNANA SIMHASAN JNANAMANDIR

LIBRARY

US \$ 3.00

Jangamawadi Math, Varanasi

Acc. No.6387.....

Foreword

More than a decade ago Mr. Bharat Jangam proved his talent as a novelist by writing a novel in Nepali called "Kalo Surya" which has been subsequently translated into English (**The Black Sun**) and several other languages including Russian and Chinese. The novel exposed rather the core of Nepal's partyless panchyat systems through the simple method of the narrator's apparently well-meaning and innocent conversation with persons in different walks of life. Without giving even the panchayat regime any excuse to ban it, 'Kalo Surya' created quite a stir among the Nepali reading public by arousing their ire and conscience against the unprecedented growth of hypocrisy, corruption and immorality in Nepali society.

In writing this novel 'Rato Gham' (**The Red Sun**) Mr. Jangam has once again followed the same method of direct narration or monologue in storytelling. This time the theme is of course different and all the more fascinating to its readers life, morals and manners in communist China with a focus on their repercussions on the indigenous people of the so-called autonomous region of Tibet.

The story opens with a scintillating account of the inquisitive narrator standing at a point a little beyond the friendship bridge at Liping, Kodari and looking up at freshly pointed houses shining in their whitish splendor in the township of Khasa (Zhangmu) on the Tibetan side. The novel fittingly ends with a description of the narrator's dreary and leisurely trek from Kodari up and down the steep mountain gorges and across the windswept plains and snow deserts to Lhasa at the roof of the world constantly evoking in the novelist's mind historical memories of Nepal's association with the area and its people.

Meanwhile the novelist had in the intervening period already visited the famed and flourishing Chinese cities and metropolises of Guangzhou (Canton), Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Beijing approaching them from the British crown colony of Hong Kong on the outskirts of the Chinese mainland. He had also in due course a rich and rewarding first-hand experience from thrilling encounters and dubious dealings with the Chinese people of various trades and

professions under different circumstances.

Unlike other countries in the world, Nepal has no sizable 'Han Chinese' minority as a permanent component of its population. As a result, Nepali in general have had little or no opportunity for getting to know and understand the Chinese people at an unofficial and popular level. If this novel will enable Nepali readers to share vicariously the author's experience with the Chinese, it will also provide the non-Nepali readers an insight into the Chinese ways and sensibilities as perceived by a creative young Nepali litterateur.

In the end, I wonder whether the novelist has any message for his readers. The subtle hint I for one have been able to deduce is that the first flush of victory and exultation brought about by China's 1949 revolution may prove to be after all short-lived and ageold historical conditions and deeply ingrained habits of thought may prompt that society to move one day in a different direction, along the path of ancient wisdom as dictated by the principles of non-violence, fellow feeling and good neighbourliness.

This is further highlighted by the author with a sharp focus on the guidelines bequeathed to posterity on an inscribed tablet by Libin, who had been esteemed as the designer and builder of the watershed management in areas adjacent to Chengdu. In the plaque, Libin talk about the wisdom of canalizing the devastating force of the mighty and irresistible river's mainstream by diverting it in numerous channels for irrigational and other constructive purposes wherever and whenever possible. The novelist rightly implies from Libin's teaching that an excessive concentration of political and economic power is likely to act as a blind force with destructive consequences, whereas reasonable delegation of authority to the lower levels of government and society may be conducive to the greater good of mankind.

I hope that the readers will receive this novel with the same spirit of welcome and enthusiasm as they received the novelist's earlier works.

23rd March 1993
Kathmandu, Nepal.

Rishikesh Shah

Chapter 1

Almost everybody had curiosity to know, to understand, even to see with his own eyes, one of the largest countries painted red on the world's map, which is China. A country, closed since 1949, sent waves of conjectures and assumptions of sorts across the globe about it. Before this there were bitter conflicts not only between the rulers and the ruled, but also between this country and those countries, big and small, of both the east and the west.

China, ruled for centuries by the kings of Chau and Chhin dynasties, gets into the whirlpool of revolution at the turn of the nineteenth century. Every ruling king/emperor of the Chhin dynasty presented China to the world with her high dignity and unsurpassed glory. But who can check the tides of time? The new ideas, the new 'isms' that were building and developing in Europe were destined to reach China one day, spreading through big and small countries of the world.

Now China begins to speak a new language, thinks a new idea, cherishes a new aspiration. Yes, all of us look for the novelty, because the old is a bore. So, people welcome change. This is human nature. This is humanism.

Any decision that is made by human mind is not, and cannot be, final. Human being keeps willing to change at every pace. Human mind keeps itself suffering, being tortured and wasting in the process of attaining the novelty. Life means 'living'. It's bound by time-limit. Because of this limiting factor of the living, there is a multitude of hopes and desires after which human beings find themselves hankering, and this is the fountain-head from which springs the temptation for the novelty.

For any living being, confinement means death and freedom means life. Even a dumb beast loves freedom. He strives to search for food for himself and for his offsprings for their bringing-up and lives roaming around with liberty. This is life.

To live one needs food. When one has to live for a long time, material necessities have to be met and it is only when they are met that human beings can aspire for serene and peaceful atmosphere for their mental development. This is what human beings desire.

Human nature is such that everybody wants to meet his basic needs on his own might, labor and intelligence. When he succeeds on this, he feels himself satisfied and enjoys himself.

But all human beings are not alike. Not all human beings are strong and capable. The weak and incapable classes are exploited by the strong in human society. Therefore, the exploited should be liberated from the exploitation of the strong. Basic needs should be satisfied on the basis of equality and a society without exploitation has to be built.

The earth and all its resources should be nobody's monopoly. It must be shared by all and should belong to all. Therefore individual ownership of capital should be put to an end, and the system of collective ownership or the state ownership should be established. And all should be given equal rights and opportunities to enjoy the available wealth of a given state. This is the only cardinal truth. This alone is the philosophy with which Marxism was born in Europe. This 'ism' succeeded to reach Russia after seventy years of its birth and China after hundred years.

To Marxism was later attached Leninism and this 'ism' spread through Russia to other countries of the world. During nineteen forties, it was linked with Mao Tsetung's Neo-Proletarian thoughts which established Neo-Proletarianism in China. As there were people with curiosity to know and understand what this Neo-Proletarianism actually was, so was I.

During the nineteen seventies just out of curiosity I decided to have a sightseeing tour to the Kodari border. When on the highway, I was very happy. I had begun my journey a little after daybreak and was driving along the Bhote Koshi river and arrived at the Kodari township. At a distance northward from there is the Friendship Bridge. I stopped at this side of the bridge. I could not cross it, because on the other side of the bridge was Chinese territory.

A line is drawn on the middle of the bridge over the Bhote Koshi river. Maybe this is the border line between Nepal and China. My curiosity to see China had to be satisfied by just enjoying the scenery beyond and looking at the statue-like sentry standing at attention at the head of the bridge.

When the rolling and jumping Bhote Koshi is joined by the Indravati, it transforms itself into the Sun Koshi. When the river, Sun Koshi is joined by other five rivers, it becomes the Sapta Koshi (a major river of Nepal). The roaring noise of the Bhote Koshi makes the atmosphere of Liping rather pleasant. The locality where the Friendship Bridge stands is called Liping by the Chinese. The trading town beyond the border is called Khasa by the Sherpas and Zhangmu by the Chinese. This Zhangmu town, though situated quite far looks as it were just near by the bridge.

The Zhangmu town, situated on the green slope of the south-facing nearby mountain, can be reached by a fifteen kilometer motorable road. One can reach the town by fifteen minutes' drive by car. On foot, it takes two hours. The shining white buildings of the town were so delightful to my mind that I kept watching those buildings for hours.

When I was looking at Zhangmu, I suddenly felt like running to reach the town. But I was helpless. You are required to have visa to go anywhere. No matter how pleasant a foreign land, it isn't easy to go there. So I just kept on looking to my heart's content. But my searching eyes could find nothing. Contrary to the roaring Bhote Koshi rolling and jumping towards the south, my mind was busy climbing the steep mountain before me on the North.

The first time I saw the Chinese people was when the Kodari Highway was under construction. The Chinese people lived together, ate together, went out together and seemed to be very reserved. So, naturally they looked different from other foreigners.

It was delightful to read about the progress made in China, following the establishment of Neo-Proletarianism in that country. During that time, the Chinese, who were working here, used to sport a small locket bearing the head of Chairman Mao, and would also distribute it among the local people who used to come into contact with them. So, some Nepalese also used to sport that locket.

It is strongly believed in Nepal that treatment of tuberculosis (T.B.) in China is very good. So a number of T.B. patients were sent to China for treatment. When the patients returned home, they were found to be strong followers of hard-line communism. They kept themselves busy in talking and explaining what communism was rather than about China. These T.B. patients from Nepal who went to China for physical treatment were sent back home after mental treatment. And they returned as hard-minded supporters of new China.

Ancient China occupies a very important place in the history of World civilization. And the story of ancient China's glory, as we know, is told by the old literature and history of this ancient land. We also know magnificent stories

of the Chinese people about their heroic deeds and exploitations. However, we know very little about new China.

The Friendship Bridge is built with the assistance of the Chinese Government, and the road by which I went there was also the fruit of their cooperation. In this regard I have much respect and great friendship for them in my heart. I, however, couldn't have expressed my feelings and sentiments to them. The reason for this, perhaps, is, none of the Chinese people whom I know were to be found there. All of them were alien to me. So they did not come up to me and speak.

I was there for hours. I waved a number of times to the Chinese people across the bridge for drawing their attention towards me, but they didn't respond at all. My long waiting proved to be fruitless. I, however, tried to see China as far as my eye-sight could go, and felt myself satisfied anyway. I turned back from the Nepal-China border towards Nepalese territory, weaving my thoughts and imaginations about China in my own fashion and with my own idiosyncratic judgements and assumptions.

As it was becoming late, I decided to spend the night at a Sherpa Lodge. I used to know the owner of the little lodge. He was a good, gentle Sherpa man. As the owner of the lodge was himself a Sherpa, he had encyclopedic information on Tibet. He began, following the takeover of Tibet by the Chinese, there is restriction on travelling to Tibet for us. We used to get our annual supply of salt from Tibet. Now we are deprived of this facility for our salt - supply.

Yes, I knew also the salt-supply that the Nepalese consumers required used to come from Tibet. Not only that, even sheep and goats were imported from Tibet for meat. Now, I am told these supplies have also stopped. He went on telling me a lot against Chinese policies. I realized that he had toured Tibet extensively. According to his version, the Chinese should have never tried to subjugate Tibet, and his own connection on the concept appeared to be pretty strong. I wanted to know the reasons of his connection, so I said - 'How would you say that China should not have subjugated Tibet? Why?'

'Do you know anything about its geographical situation?' He said.

'Yes, I know. On the south is the Himalaya and on the North is China,' I said telling him about what I knew about the geography of Tibet.

'Yes, there is the high Himalaya on the south. However it doesn't mean that Tibet is far away from Nepal. Considering the vastness of China, Tibet is not near it. So far as policies are concerned, Tibet has always maintained her equidistance between China and Nepal. This is amply proved by our mutual relations and behavior.'

Listening to the weighty and exploring statements of the owner of the lodge regarding the relations between Nepal and Tibet, I was sort of surprised and became conscious and careful towards him. I queried, 'Brother, what's your name? May I know? And what did you do before this lodge business?'

'My name is Wangdu Sherpa. Though my original home is in Nepal, my life style is just like that of the Tibetans of Southern Tibet. I was on business for many years in Tibet. I had a number of business partners there. But who knows how the time-wheel may roll with events. The personality like the Dalai Lama had to run away to take shelter in India. What to say about ordinary people like us.'

While he was talking, he abruptly stopped and started staring at me. The reason was clear. He suddenly felt suspicious of me. But the queries he put to me were very simple. When I answered them to his satisfaction, his doubts and suspicions about me were cleared up. The nature of our conversation was such that there was no end to it. As I went on showing so many curiosities to him he was sort of compelled to satisfy them one by one.

He went on, wearing grim expression on his face, 'Do you know? When Tibet was invaded by the Chinese troops, all the Tibetans, from ordinary citizens to higher authorities, business men and merchants and all were just running away. Some of them succeeded in their run-away efforts, some failed, but majority of them were forced to remain confined in the dark rooms where they died of suffocation and those who survived were just counting their days on their death-bed. In this way the important and well-to-do people of Tibet have disappeared from the country.'

'Who were they who survived?' I unwarily asked.

'They, who were helpless, who had no means, were compelled to stay back,' he said with seriousness.

I was surprised by his statements. According to his version, even today thousands of Tibetans are leaving the country for Nepal and India. There is not only one route. There are several from Arunachal of India and Gangtok of Sikkim to Olangchung, Solu and the Kodari Highway, Dhunche, Mustang, Manang and Humla of Nepal. There are many routes running through these points by which, Tibetans are coming to Nepal and India. Whether traders or farmers, no people in any walk of life wants to stay in Tibet these days. Because their head-figure has left the country, so they find themselves lonely.

'You mean, all have left the country?' I said ignorantly.

'What did you say? How can all leave? Where is the route to escape by? All the routes have been blocked by the Chinese troops,' He said, trying to make me understand the situation. He went on, 'the Chinese troops laid seize

in such a way that there was no way for anyone to escape. Moreover, they quickly took under their control the main cities and towns.'

I expressed agreement or disagreement to what he said. I was just listening to him with rapt attention. He was telling me many things which I had no idea about. I was just nodding to him to show my agreement to the point which I knew while he went on and on.

In the mean time, a lady entered with a thermoflask of tea and two cups in her hands and stood before us. She put the cups before us and poured the tea into the cups. Then she took her seat by us. I was let by Mr. Wangdu later to know that she was his wife and her name was Tshiring.

As Tshiring's parental house was in the Tibetan territory these days, it was not possible for her to visit her parents. According to her version, one of her brothers succeeded to escape somehow, but others were still in Tibet. As her parents were very old, they could not make it across the Himalaya by hiding during the day and making journey during the night. So they were just destined to die without seeing their daughter again. This was Tshiring's sorrowful complaint!

Tshiring expressed her sorrow with tears in her eyes and pains in her heart.

I said, consoling her, 'Maybe, they are all right in Tibet. Why are you worrying so much?'

'You say, they may be all-right! But I don't believe. For so many days, they couldn't get out of their house. Those who tried to run in panic or tried to say something against the Chinese troops, they were just shot. There is nothing doing and all just hopeless. All this information I got from my brother. My brother told me that many people fell dead while running, being terrified when they saw the Chinese troops and many others were buried under snow and many are still missing. Those who are still in Tibet and how they are living there, you won't realize it,' Tshiring told me in detail about her experience in a voice filled with sadness.

Wangdu said, supporting his wife, 'Listen! you don't know. Just in this Bhote Koshi river bed hundreds of Tibetans fell dead!'

'How?' I wanted to know.

'As they came over a long distance, they got tired, and when they saw the border, they just hurried up and jumped over the slippery rocks only to go down the rocky mountain and fell dead. Other ran away before the Chinese troops and they opened fire at them and killed. One of them who got killed this way, I know him. He was a businessman from Sigarche. His death was painful

to me for a long time!' Wangdu told me of incidence reviving his past experiences and memories and appeared very sad.

He went on, 'We used to go to Tibet and purchased salt paying Nepalese currency. Trade relation with Tibet is centuries old. But now, where is it all gone? Where is that trade? Where are those traders?'

I listened to him with full attention. What he was telling me was all new to me. So there was no room for me to make comments. I just went on listening and tried to make out what he said.

He went on, 'A great number of Sherpas and their hybrid children are still there in Tibet.'

When Nepalese traders go to Tibet on business, they meet Tibetan women and have intimate relations. And children born out of such relations are called Khachchar (hybrid). These Khachchars are not just a few, but there are thousands of them. On the way to Lhasa in areas such as Kuti, Tingri and Sigarche, village after village abounds in these Khachchar people.

'Which country these hybrids belong to?' I queried.

In reply, he said, 'According to an old treaty between Nepal and Tibet, sons belong to Nepal and daughters to Tibet. But now as the Chinese rule Tibet, it is not possible to distinguish who is who. By appearance they are all alike, they are all Tibetans. And all of them live in Tibet.'

I didn't know about these hybrids before Wangdu told me. According to the old treaty, a number of Nepalese resident consular officers used to be accredited to different regions of Tibet. These Nepalese Consular Officers, like Diuthas and Mukhiyas, used to protect and control these hybrids. The job that these hybrids did was to transport the goods of the Nepalese traders from place to place on fixed rates of payments, and the right to punish or reward these people used to belong to the Nepalese Consular Officers.

Well experienced Wangdu Sherpa was giving me lots of ideas on Tibet. According to his version, Tibet is a large country, various ethnic communities reside in this country. In the eastern region of the country are the Angdu ethnic community and the Khampas in the western region. In the central region are the Tibetans of the Nepalese Origin. Therefore, Tibet belongs to the Tibetans. And in the old times Tibet was under Nepal's control.

It was none of my business to take interest in Nepal's right on the social, economic and political aspects of Tibet. So I didn't show any more interest on these matters. Naturally, our conversation came to a stop. I started to inquire about my dinner. In the meantime, Tshiring had prepared dinner for me and also other necessary arrangements for the night. After dinner I went into my bed-room.

Waves of my thoughts and imaginations mixed with the constant roaring of the Bhote Koshi had penetrated the closed barriers of the Chinese controlled territory of Tibet. In my hazy imagination I had the visions of the shadowy pictures of Mao-Tsetung's Neo-Proletarianism.

I had heard about the political suppression and economic exploitation in China, though I had never been there, nor seen with my own eyes. To know about China being liberated from the old feudal cultural domination and the Chinese people being educated, advancing and making progress in energetic field under the plan of building a New China initiated by the ideologies of Neo-proletarianism was naturally a matter of great joy for a suppressed and downtrodden citizen of a poor country like myself.

It was already dawn. As there was no management of toilet or latrine there, one had to go out into the open field or river-side for emptying one's bowels. I thought of going into the river-side. Finishing my morning business, I spent some time, enjoying the pleasant morning on the river-side.

Just across was the Chinese territory. Why the two sides of the same river were not the same? After all, the same mountains, same rocky area, same geography, even then why it looked different? Yes, there was a world of difference, but why people were rushing and running in crowds to cross and come to this side of the river? In a way, it didn't look much different. However, why people were so much attracted to this side of the river? Why were they frightened of that community whose goal was building a New China?

All these questions rose in the inner core of my mind one by one. And I observed the rocky mountain in front of me from top to bottom, and at times happened to look at the trading town of Zhangmu (also called Khasa). I have heard that many years before, Khasa and Remote hills together were small pasture of the Sherpas. The Nepali word for 'pasture' is 'Kharka'. From 'Kharka', I am told, the name Khasa is derived. So the place came to be known as Khasa. As the place fell within the Tibetan territory the Chinese had developed it into a small house and Chinese called it Zhangmu. When one looks up from down the Bhote Koshi river the Zhangmu town situated at the slope of the south-facing mountain looks breath-takingly beautiful.

If the Tibetans were provided with guns, they perhaps, wouldn't have taken to their heels in such a way. They might have stayed put at their place thinking that they were powerful enough to resist any external encroachment upon their land.

'Revolution comes to energize a country and on the question of national interests all should be united. So all should realize that revolutions come for fulfilling the objective which is the good of all the people.' Reflecting on these ideas I started climbing up from down the river.

I went upstairs to the dining room. It was lunch time. There were many people seated for lunch. Tshiring was busy attending on her clients. I started towards a chair in one corner of the room and took my seat.

Wangdu turned towards me and asked, 'Was it cold in the night?'

'No,' I said, 'It was a delightful night. I slept like a baby! Adding some words of appreciation, I further said, 'Dinner was very good, and the bed very comfortable and warm. Thank you!'

Wanting to know my intention, he said, 'Would you also like to have your lunch here?'

It was almost our lunch time, too. I thought I would have my lunch and move. So I nodded my acceptance to Wangdu's suggestion for lunch.

Tshiring came up to me with a salty cup of Tibetan tea and placed it before me, 'Do you take salty Tibetan tea? If you don't like, I will bring another cup with sugar.'

'No, No. It's all right! I will take it', I said and began sipping the Tibetan tea.

Whenever the level of my tea came down with each of my sips Tshiring filled up instantly. Thus she went on filling up after my each and every sip. I couldn't empty my cup of tea due to the careful and cautious attendance of Tshiring on her guest for a pretty long time.

'Where do you like your life, here or in Tibet?' I asked Tshiring who was about to pour tea with her never-ending service.

'Now it is better here!' said Tshiring.

'How about the place?'

Tibet is a better place!' Tshiring said.

'Why? Why is it better in Tibet?' I expressed my curiosity.

'Up in Tibet, villages are bright and beautiful. It is very pleasant up there!' said Tshiring.

Maybe, she was then remembering her birth place and with its memories appeared cheerful and happy. She described and also gave one an impression that they were building a paradise in Tibet. One's birth-place is equal to paradise. So Tibet is good and beautiful, maybe because the country is her birth-place.

A young man who was sitting near us was not only listening to what Tshiring was saying, but also making enquiries on Tibet with her. He was informed by Tshiring how Tibetans had to leave Tibet for Nepal and India under the oppressive actions of the Chinese troops.

The young man who showed so much curiosity on Tibet and wanted to draw information from Tshiring was Mr. Kamal Kant. We later introduced ourselves to each other. Mr. Kamal Kant held communist ideology. Moreover, he was a staunch supporter of Maoism.

Following our mutual introduction, we came closer to each other. With an intention of getting some information from him, I expressed my curiosity to him.

Kamal Kant who strongly holds that the Chinese Revolution is a part of the World Revolution and the success of the Neo-Proletarianism itself is the success of World Communist Movement, told me many things about old China.

'Ancient China was highly civilized and cultured, but since the Opium War of 1840 A.D., the social conditions of China started to deteriorate. People slowly became selfish and even resorted to opium addiction. Power of the feudal and the semi-feudal classes was on the rise. One class was enjoying luxurious life in the name of religion, whereas another was sweating in the name of the same religion. Something went wrong in the make-up of the society itself. And later when there was invasion by foreign capitalism on China, Chinese society slowly transformed and developed the colonial and semi-colonial characteristics. In this way, China was gradually deviating away from her real cultural identity.' Such was the argument of Kamal Kant.

I listened to Kamal Kant's argument with keen interest. He further said, 'During the time of Chau and Chhin dynasties, the economy of China was at its worst. Diversity and deviation were creeping into the cultural life of this land of cultural glory. The culture that had taken responsibility of building better politics, society and economy started turning itself into an aristocratic culture. This is why the Chinese Revolution had made politics, economy and culture its three targets to strike at.'

His description of Chinese history showed that Kamal Kant was sort of a China specialist. I thought I knew something about China. But my knowledge about China turned to be dwarf before that of Kamal Kant. I was really much enlightened about China by Kamal Kant.

According to the version of Kamal Kant, the sun of World Capitalism was setting and the red sun of communism was rising. So most part of the globe was now under the banner of communism. And the remaining part of the globe also would soon come under the control of the communists. Such was the belief of Kamal Kant.

I didn't agree with Kamal Kant on his statements. It was only his faith on communism, and it was also his guess that Communism might spread over

the globe, or it might instead get wiped out of the map of the globe - it was just in the womb of the future.

Another gentleman put a question to Kamal Kant, 'Why is the Chinese revolution criticized all over the World?'

'Imperialism has dominated the world. The Chinese revolution strikes at the very heart of imperialism. All the imperialist countries and the countries under their influence do not only criticize Chinese revolution but they are vehemently against it. But socialist countries are not against it, though they do not support it. But I suppose people everywhere are not criticizing it. And workers and farmers from all over the world are supporting it. So, the Chinese revolution has been more of an issue of support than criticism,' Kamal Kant pressed his argument firmly.

'Support for what? Support for the gun and revolution? Support for giving up one's means of livelihood? Or support for the gun, instead of farm employments and factory equipments, for revolution? What sort of support are you talking about?' the gentleman asked Kamal Kant to make his point more clear.

'You are right! Workers and farmers belong to the proletarian class. This class has been downtrodden and oppressed for centuries under aristocracy and capitalism. World revolution is now being spearheaded under the leadership of the proletariat, and now on under it is their own leadership that nations/states will run. Then there will be no rich and poor classes, nor high and low. Any nation/state will run on the basis of equality!' Kamal Kant expressed his views with conviction and faith.

I wanted to draw Kamal Kant's attention towards practical affairs rather than barren theories. I said, 'Why were the Tibetans frightened and on the run when the Chinese revolutionaries entered Tibet, as if tigers had entered a deer park and the deer were on the run. Why the farmers and workers failed to realize that the revolution was initiated under their own proletarian dictatorship?' I put queries before Kamal Kant.

He said, 'Those runaways were the reactionary elements supporting the anti-communist, anti-revolutionary aristocracy and monopoly capitalists and the lackeys of the bourgeoisie believing in conservative traditional thoughts. Most of the people of Tibet are not running away. Only those people are running away who are antirevolutionary and imperialist agents and lackeys.'

When Wangdu Sherpa and Tshiring heard Kamal Kant openly criticizing the Tibetans and supporting the Chinese revolution, their attention was naturally drawn towards us.

It was already lunch time, but drinking and serving tea was still going on. As it was a bit cold that day, I didn't say 'no thanks' when Tshiring came to pour tea with her never-ending tea-service. Kamal Kant, was also busy drinking tea.

Addressing Kamal Kant, Tshiring said, 'Why are you criticizing the Tibetans?'

Kamal Kant felt a kind of shock when Tshiring put such a question to him. He was openly supporting the Chinese revolution. But he was not talking much about Tibet. However, why Wangdu Sherpa and Tshiring were so curious about our conversation, I didn't understand.

At first, Kamal Kant was a bit nervous. Within a short while he was his normal self, then he said in reply to Tshiring's questioning, 'No. I am not criticizing the Tibetans. I am just talking about the Chinese revolution'

'Well! You were praising the Chinese revolution on one hand and on the other, you were criticizing the Tibetans just a while ago, weren't you? 'Wangdu Sherpa joined his wife in challenging Kamal Kant's viewpoints.

'It's no good to praise the Chinese revolution without really understanding it,' Tshiring said in support of her husband.

In an effort to reconcile with both Wangdu and Tshiring, Kamal Kant said, 'As Chinese revolution is a revolution spearheaded by the poor and the exploited it is only an enemy of the aristocracy and capitalism but not ours. The Chinese revolutionaries are our friends and they are always advancing the revolution in the interest of the farmers and the workers.'

'How do you say they are advancing the revolution in the interest of the farmers and workers? You have not seen it all with your own eyes. You may have read books, but you have no experience of the reality. Communist publicity can reach you. But communist excesses do not reach you. That's why you lecture to people on the praise and appreciation of the Chinese revolution. How can you realize the hurts that have caused us so much suffering!' Wangdu gave vent to his feelings in a touching way.

In support of her husband's view-point, Tshiring said, 'Look! the Chinese revolution might be good for the Chinese within the Chinese territory, but for Tibet and the Tibetans it cannot do any good, because Tibet is different geographically and historically from China. Tibet is also different theologically and culturally. To think Tibet and China as one country is an unjust and arbitrary infringement upon Tibet.'

Wangdu and Tshiring wanted to prove the encroachment of Chinese revolution over Tibet as improper and unjust whereas Kamal Kant wanted to prove it to be proper, just and natural. There was a World of difference between

the view-points of the two sides. If the discussion continued further, the outcome might not be good. Sensing this trend of the discussion I intervened then and there taking a middle position.

Kamal Kant was a young man of about 25 years of age, of simple nature, fair complexion and soft-spoken, carrying a shoulder-strip wallet, and his simple dress presented him to be a school teacher. With him was another youth as his companion. He also carried a shoulder wallet. He paid more attention to listening to discussion than speaking. Both of them looked of the same age, however, one could guess that the other youth was accompanying Kamal Kant as his assistant.

The verbal counter-attack Wangdu and Tshiring launched in chorus silenced Kamal Kant for a while, but in an effort to make them understand things, he said, 'Tibet was always under China. So it was necessary for China to establish her full control over Tibet for her security. The reason is Tibet was under Chinese empire in the past. At present also it is under China, which is a vast country. The only difference is in the past the aristocratic Tibet was under imperialist China, now the same Tibet is under communist China which upholds equality.'

'No mention of aristocracy! If one joins the Chinese all is right. For those who are helpless, those who have failed to please the Chinese, all is wrong. How can you say there is equality? The problems and reality of Tibet can be realized only by the local people, not by the Chinese. You should realize this fact,' Wangdu advanced his argument emphatically.

The discussion between Kamal Kant on one side and Wangdu and Tshiring on the other was heating up. Kamal Kant was trying to explain the theoretic aspect of the issue, whereas the Wangdu couple was trying to establish the practical side of the issue.

Trying to prove his point further Wangdu said, 'If the Chinese had wanted to export their revolution to Tibet, they could have done so through the Tibetans themselves. Had it been done so, there couldn't be such a panic as is the case today. Still more deplorable is that they forced the Dalai Lama leave the country. So the Tibetans started leaving the country. There was a time when people moved in long lines and crossed the Himalayas. Many of them died on the way. Those who survived are living on the foreign lands as refugees. They who had to go through all this know well where the shoe pinches!'

'Those conservatives and traditionalists, who exploit people in the name of religion, are thugs with vested interest. They are also the imperialist lackeys. These people only stand in the way of building the New China. So it is better that they leave and not stay back,' Kamal Kant, a staunch supporter

of the Chinese revolution put it enthusiastically. Meanwhile, Wangdu, trying to stop Kamal Kant, said, raising his voice, 'Do not say that!'

'The social process of building up is not guided by the Chinese revolutionaries. Rather it is, and will be, going by natural laws. Faith and relations of human beings cannot be changed. Guns can kill human bodies, but not human faith, human ideas and their national culture. So no people can abandon their national culture,' Wangdu further said forcefully, 'It is wrong to think, and there is no compulsion about it, that a nation's social organization and system should be surrendered to another'.

As the discussion was growing more and more heated, I thought I should intervene, so I said, 'Your statement is practical and natural. Your experience also indicates the same. I think your views are right. Mr Kamal Kant is a young man. He seems to have gathered lots of information and ideas on communism. Now he seems to be collecting information on the Chinese revolution about things.'

While I was yet to finish my statement, Tshiring came to us and said in a doubtful tone, addressing Kamal Kant, 'I am wondering whether you had been here before? Yes?

'Maybe!,' Kamal Kant replied hesitatingly.

'Say yes. Why maybe?'

'Yes. I think so!'

Kamal Kant had been there at that Kodari township a few months back. At another lodge, he happened to have a heated discussion such as the one now. Following the heated discussion, some people had suspicion about him and his wallet was searched. In the search they had found pictures of Mao-Tsetung and books on the Chinese revolution. When they found these articles with him, he was chased away. It was exposed following Tshiring's suspicion on him.

'Do you have pictures of Mao-Tsetung with you?' I asked Kamal Kant.

'Yes, I have,' he said without any hesitation.

'Can you show me?,' I tried to look into his wallet.

He took out a number of books on China and pictures of Mao-Tsetung, as well as a fistful of small lockets with the head of Mao. He handed me one of the lockets.

When Wangdu Sherpa saw the stuffs of the wallet of Kamal Kant, he said, 'This gentleman was charging the Tibetans as agents, now he is showing

up himself to be an agent of the Chinese. It is difficult to know people. This gentleman is an example.'

Wangdu, thus, was attacking on Kamal Kant's character point-blank. But Kamal Kant didn't care Wangdu's attack so much. I tried my best to mediate between them.

Kamal Kant had ordered for lunch. But it seemed he wanted to move away without taking his lunch. Because I realized that Kamal Kant had upset both Wangdu and his wife Tshiring, I didn't feel it proper to stop Kamal Kant.

When Kamal Kant and his companion left, Wangdu Sherpa said, 'Did you understand now? Chinese revolutionaries have world- wide network. See, how things are going today. One country has a revolution, and it is publicized in other countries. They are distributing photos and badges of Mao-Tsetung everywhere. They train young men like this gentleman and send them to the nooks and corners of the world. No matter how much evil they are doing, there is no dearth of people who say they are doing good.'

'No, no. You should not doubt everybody and everything, you see,' I said, trying to calm down Wangdu.

'No. It is not the case of our doubt. This man used to talk like this before also. And today he did the same. And this is no good', said Tshiring.

'Well! We just had an opportunity to know his ideas and viewpoints. It is not necessary for us to follow his ideas and viewpoints,' I told them in an effort to calm them down.

'You are right! If you are a well-informed person or enlightened, you do not come under the influence of these people. But simple people are hypnotized by these people and they follow them blindly,' Wangdu said somewhat appreciably of my position.

It was now lunch time. As Tshiring was preparing the lunch, Wangdu expressed his wish to join me at the lunch. So we had our lunch together.

About Tibet he said, 'Look sir! We Sherpas are the people whose habitat is the lap of the Himalaya. Half of the year we spend in Nepal, another half in Tibet. And we have never thought Tibet apart from Nepal. And Tibetans also do not discriminate us. Moreover, we profess the same religion and speak the same language and our social and cultural traditions are almost alike. But now because of the political demarcation drawn, are we separated from Tibet?'

I understood well how Wangdu felt in the inner recess of his heart. Over the centuries these people were roaming in the open Himalayan region restricted by none. Today, they were feeling sort of quarantined within a narrow bound. It was not difficult to understand.

Wangdu further said about Tibet, 'Tibet has never been a sovereign state. Sometimes Tibet was under China, sometimes part of Tibet was under Nepal. Had Nepal been a powerful country, Tibet could have been aligned with Nepal.'

Wangdu's statements were an expression of his resentment against the Chinese revolution and protest on the invasion of Tibet by China, as well as his resentment against the restriction on his free travelling to Tibet and complaint against deprivation of opportunities for visiting his near and dear ones in Tibet.

If somebody else was in the place of Wangdu Sherpa, he would have felt the same way as Wangdu did, and would have made the same sort of statements as Wangdu made. I say so because there is no artificiality in the statements of Wangdu. These statements are the expression of human heart and anybody can easily understand these feelings.

After Lunch I prepared to move. Expressing my wish to visit Kodari again, I took leave of Wangdu and Tshiring.

○

Chapter 2

During the decade of nineteen seventies I had been to Hong Kong and had an opportunity to see and come into contact with the Chinese citizens of Hongkong. People of Chinese origin are not only to be found in Hong Kong, but in most countries of South East Asia. The people of Chinese origin that I saw during my journeys to Thailand and Singapore were, as I found them, different from the Chinese people that I had seen in Nepal. Still more different were the Chinese of Taiwan. When I met them, my first impression was they were not Chinese but belonged to some other race.

One day I had an opportunity to visit the Gorkha camp in Hong Kong. The British had taken Hong Kong on lease for hundred years and turned it into a military base in East Asia. In this military camp are posted the Gorkha soldiers. Here I happened to meet Major Lal Kumar. Following a short conversation we became good friends.

I found Lal Kumar to be well-educated, having good political knowledge and information as well as very cooperative. Though his forefathers came from Panchthar in the mountainous region of Eastern Nepal, during his father's life-time they had moved down to Dharan, one of the famous trading towns of the plain in Eastern Nepal. And now his family house is in Dharan, I was told.

Lal Kumar told me, he was one of the recruits of the Ghopa camp of Dharan. Ghopa camp is a British recruiting center in the Eastern Nepal. Though he had long been in the military service, yet, he told me he didn't, in fact, like it. He is in the line just because his father was also a military man.

Following our pretty long conversation on the Gorkha Brigade; it took a turn on Hong Kong and then on China. After my expressing curiosities on

some matters which I wanted to know Lal Kumar told me much about China. When I expressed my wish to have some idea on the life of the common Chinese people, Major Lal planned a program for a visit to the Red China border for both of us. I expressed my happiness on his program and we decided to leave for the border at eight O'clock in the next morning.

I had not been to China. I had seen just a part of it on the Northern border of my country. So when Major Lal was going to show me the Chinese territory bordering Hong Kong, I was quite delighted.

According to the fixed program Major Lal arrived at my hotel. I hastily prepared myself. We were now going towards the border. After about one hour's drive, we stopped at a place which looked like a garden. Now we got out of the vehicle, climbed about five minutes and came to a hill-top. There was a row of chairs. And it looked like a tourist spot. Major Lal stood and pointing with his right hand said, 'That's China!'

There I didn't see the China that I really wanted to see. I was only looking at a green crop-field. I turned my searching eyes around in an effort to find something specific and then turned them on Major Lal. He understood my feelings. Then he thrust his hand into his pocket and took out a binocular. Handing the binocular to me, he said, 'Look! They are building houses. Construction works are going on.'

I pointed the binocular toward the horizon. Yes! Major Lal was right. They were building houses. High rise buildings under construction emerged slowly. The city under construction, I was told by Major Lal, was meant to be a center of free enterprise. The name of the city was Shenzhen. Its construction was started during the seventies.

China was far away from where we were standing. Maybe, it was for security reasons that tourists were not permitted to move up to the border. Everyday hundreds of tourists came there for sight seeing, and saw China from that spot. Major Lal told me about it in detail. Still far away on tops of the mountains, we could see small military booths with the red Chinese flags fluttering over them. We remained there for quite a long time and discussed many things about China.

Major Lal said, 'Almost everyday, Chinese people try to cross the border and come to Hong Kong even at the risk of their life. They do not seem to care if they get drowned while swimming throughout the night in the sea, or get shot by the Chinese soldiers when they are found out escaping. Despite this all the flow of escapees has not stopped. However, among these run-aways, only twenty-five per cent can escape. Seventy-five percent of them die on the way - one way or the other!'

'Why do they try to escape even at the risk of their life?' I said at once.

In reply Major Lal said, 'It is natural for those who have their relatives here in Hong Kong to try to come here even at the risk of their life. But those with no relatives here are also swarming to Hong Kong simply because they couldn't resist the attraction of the shining high rise buildings of Hong Kong.'

Major Lal continued, 'At the beginning there were about ten thousand people in this Hong Kong city. Now there are about eight million people here. However it doesn't mean that all of them are from China. There are many people from the Commonwealth countries who have got Hong Kong's citizenship. There is also an increase in the population of the old inhabitants of Hong Kong. A great number of Chinese families has migrated from the mainland China to Hong Kong because Hong Kong is an open society. There are about four million Chinese runaways from the communist China.'

'Hong Kong is a small island within the Canton province of China. As it is a rocky island, its land is not cultivable. The first inhabitants of this island were not farmers but fishermen. As the British in the process of expanding their rule all over the world came to Hong Kong situated on the west of the Pacific, they got this island on lease from the Chinese either with their dominating influence or favor of the Chinese and the British built their military base here and later established their direct rule on this island,' said Major Lal, trying to give me detailed information about Hong Kong.

As the island was not suitable for agriculture, all the necessary food stuffs had to be imported from other countries. So the British declared the island as a free port and opened it to the tourists. This experiment of the British has really been a grand success. Hong Kong has been a big attraction to the tourists. Every tourist wishes to pay a visit to Hong Kong once in his life time. Thus, as a free port, Hong Kong has been a world trade center. Though it is just a small island, it has occupied an important place in the world.

Though the majority of the people in Hong Kong are Chinese and it is administered by the British governor accredited by the United Kingdom, it is not a country or nation. It's just a British administered territory. There are about seven thousand Gorkha soldiers here. But they are not the soldiers of the Nepal Government. They are a military power-group of the British Government.

Major Lal continued, 'Now where we are standing, it is a newly claimed area of Hong Kong. The population of Hong Kong increased in such a way that it was going to burst at its rims. So the British asked the Chinese for more area to the territory to accommodate its people. But following the advent of communism in China, it has not been possible for the British to ask the Chinese for more area to be added to the existing territory. So the British started to reclaim land from the sea, filling it with soil.' Pointing towards the east, he

said, 'Those buildings over there which you see are erected on the land reclaimed from the sea filling it with soil.'

Yes, one is surprised to see the development of Hong Kong. It is fantastic! Every year hundreds of buildings get constructed. Roads are being built at the same pace. Now one can travel between Kowloon and Hong Kong by the subway built under the sea and the high rise buildings.

Our conversation focused on China and Hong Kong was getting ahead. The Shenzhen city which was under construction within the Chinese territory was being built like Hong Kong. Advancing such a logic Major Lal said, 'If the Chinese made the Shenzhen city, which was now under construction, a free port like Hong Kong, it will influence the Chinese economy in a tremendous way.'

After discussing many things, we decided to return. All along the long journey we just kept ourselves busy talking on China inside our moving automobile.

The Chinese living in the Hong Kong area, as I see them, are as superstitious as the Nepalese people having belief in hell and heaven and maintain the rituals of ancestor - worship as we Nepalese do. Even today they perform the rite of the anniversary of the dead like us.

They also maintain the belief that the dead ancestors are gods. So they burn incense and bow in memory or before the picture of the dead. Moreover, they also burn incense daily in the morning at the corners of the main doors and offer prayers. Such rituals along with prayer, they believe, will keep the devils and evil spirits away.

All these informations I got from Major Lal. Information on many more matters interested me which I received from Major Lal all along the way as he was driving to drop me at my hotel.

Next I planned to visit Macau via Hong Kong. As the British have taken Hong Kong on lease, so the Portuguese have taken Macau on lease too. Though Macau, like Hong Kong, was made a free port, yet it failed to compete with Hong Kong. So it took up casino business. Now as a casino center, Macau attracts lots of tourists from all over the world. Macau is supposed to have one of the biggest casino houses in the world. So thousands of tourists come here just for gambling.

There is a city named Zuhai near Macau which is within the territory of China. This city of Zuhai, I have been told, is going to be made a free port, too. So they were constructing high rise buildings there. This time also, like the last, Major Lal was with me on the visit to the Chinese border.

I found Major Lal well informed about this area in East Asia as he has long been living here, holding a post in the security service as a responsible officer.

In Macau, we thought of visiting the Chinese border much more worthwhile than visiting the gambling houses. So we moved towards the border. Here too, I found that they did not allow tourists to go close to the border. We saw from afar the very strict security measures maintained by the Chinese soldiers. Major Lal also explained to me in detail how the Chinese soldiers were maintaining the security measures on the sea and showed me on-the-spot examples as how they were doing it practically on our way up and down by sea. We travelled to Macau aboard a steamer.

In these days, China is closed in such a way that there is no way to peer and pry inside it and nobody knows as how its life is going on. Everybody makes his own guess and tells stories about life in China. One knows about China only when the Chinese government brings into publicity, or what the Chinese government thinks right for publicity. That is the only source of information on China.

'I also do not know much about China myself', Major Lal said, and giving me advice, he further said, 'It won't be easy for you to know about China, yet if you want to know about the Chinese family, you have to leave the hotel and stay at the small Chinese guest houses run by the Chinese themselves and get the information that you want.'

Major Lal's advice was right. So I did it accordingly. I went to stay at a Chinese guest house run by a Chinese. Most Hong Kong Chinese have adopted Christianity and live like a westerner. Because of this fact, their own cultural identity seems to be disappearing. And as the western civilization is dominating them, the individual is growing more and more selfish and self-centered.

Peter, the owner of the guest house where I was staying has old parents. They also do some work. The whole family is engaged in the running of the guest house. I have mentioned the name of Peter here because he speaks English with me. However, he speaks very slowly. His parents do not know English. This well-to-do family from Shanghai was turned homeless during the days of people's revolution. As they could not stand the fire of the revolution, they had fled China and came to Hong Kong during nineteen forties. In those days large number of Chinese people from several provinces of the country fled and came to Hong Kong willy-nilly. Peter in those days was a small boy, so he could learn Cantonese Chinese. Thus this family somehow managed to run a guest house.

His Chinese name is Peng Sanglu. But he is better known by the name Peter. I wanted to know the historical back-ground of Peter's family. I slowly began showing my curiosities for information about the history of the family and their background. And now and then Peter went on satisfying my curiosity.

'Had there been no people's revolution in China, had there been the same old political system in the country, I could have been one of the richest men of the world, I could own dozens of ships and hundreds of motor cars and have own a five-star hotel in each and every city of China and I would have been the managing director of all the companies and organizations'. Peter blurted out his feelings unwarily one evening.

Peter in T-shirt and half-pant, hanging a bunch of keys of his guest-house rooms on his waistline and sitting on the sofa with crossed legs, posed himself as a very responsible person before me.

'Yes! brother, your family must have suffered like hell! Otherwise why anybody should leave his homeland!' I said.

'That's what I say! You do understand things. This is a foreign land for us where there is neither linguistic similarity, nor similarity in food and drink. Neither is there cultural similarity, nor of religion. Don't think that all the Chinese are alike. Chinese from every province have their own language, culture and traditions, even their own type of food and drink. Moreover, their physical stature and looks also are different. So we have nothing similar with the Cantonese Chinese here,' Peter went on telling me non-stop.

Peter and his family, as he told me, had to face great hardships while they were trying to settle here in Hong Kong. I was listening and realizing Peter's feelings of their past misery. In short the story of his family was really pathetic.

Peng Sanglu's father Tey Sanglu was a member of one of the wealthiest families of Shanghai. Tey Sanglu had, in those days, owned a big hotel, five passenger ships as well as ten small steamers. He used to operate also as a money lender. He would lend money to important and ordinary traders of the city and make money out of this financial business, too. Tey Sanglu's elder brother, I was told, was an intelligent person and very dutiful. Because of his intelligence and dutifulness Lu family had been able to make fast progress.

One day, one revolutionary communist party leader called on the elder brother of Peng Sanglu. He refused to go to the camp of the revolutionaries. After two months they sent him a reminder. Again he hesitated to respond to their call. Time was moving fast. The revolutionaries captured Shanghai. Many American, British and Japanese Citizens were given opportunity to leave China. But the Chinese were not given such opportunity. As Lu family was

influential, the revolutionaries wanted to take their company. But it was denied to them. One revolutionary soldier entered the office of Tey Sanglu and fired ten shots at his brother while he was engaged at his work. Thus his elder brother was shot dead by the revolutionaries in their own office. Following this event, Tey Sanglu had left Shanghai with his wife and Peng Sanglu for Hong Kong by steamer.

With his wife and child, but without money, and only with his clothes on his back, Tey Sanglu had reached Hong Kong by his own steamer after seven days of non-stop sailing. When Lu family, troubled with hunger and thirst, set their foot on the soil of Hong Kong, they felt they were blessed with new life.

Their wealth, their property and prestige - all were gone! And their inborn human rights were also left behind with the revolutionaries.

'You mean, you couldn't get opportunity to bring your wealth with you?' I asked for more information from them to convince myself.

'How can you bring your wealth with you when your life is at risk?' Reviving his memory of the past, Peng Sanglu continued. 'If we had not taken our decision immediately and fled, my father would have been shot dead by the revolutionaries. If so, what would have been my fate?'

Peng had a great desire to pay a visit to his fore-fathers' place in Shanghai at least once in his life-time. Chinese government had not yet opened the country to the citizens of other countries. When the Chinese government would allow free travel to the citizens of other countries, Peter would stand in the first line. He was determined about it.

Yes! Is there anyone who does not love one's mother country? And who does not like to be with one's near-and-dear ones? Nobody can be indifferent to this? It was inherent in human nature. In the meantime, Peter's father came and took a seat near us. Perhaps Peter told his father in Chinese that the focus of our conversation was on the revolt in Shanghai. Peter's father now started telling the story perhaps.

I could guess by his gestures that Peter's father was now talking about the revolution and the revolutionaries in Shanghai. Peter was listening to his father, paying full attention. Now and then Peter showed reactions by putting short queries to his father.

I know well that the philosophy of communism was formulated by Karl Marx in the mid - nineteenth century in Germany. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels added commentaries and explanations on the Communist Manifesto from time to time. In this way they were able to arouse popular awareness on communism.

When the Industrial Revolution began in Europe, conflict between the mill-owners and workers also began at the same time. Workers didn't receive the value, as they should, for their labor. Exploitation was going beyond limit. Philosophers, politicians and journalists were all engaged in finding solution to the problem of exploitation.

At that time, defining the concept of the proletariat, Friedreich Angels said, 'The proletariat is that class of the society which earns its living only by selling its labor.' In other words, the proletariat is a class of the society which was born during the nineteenth century.

Karl Marx and Angels, who believed communism to be the philosophy for the liberation of the proletariat, did not believe that the proletariat existed over the centuries before the Industrial Revolution. They believed that the proletariat was born with the birth of the Industrial Revolution.

Whether Peter had any idea of communism or not, I didn't know. But he said, putting a query to me, 'What kind of revolt of the proletariat is it in China that has been able to bring about such a massive change?'

Cutting him short and without paying attention to his query I said, 'Do you know what Communism is?'

'Sure, I do!' said he at once.

'Can you explain me?'

'Why not?'

'Then go ahead.'

Beginning with seriousness he said, 'According to the Latin root communism means - to serve together, and according to the theory of Marx, communism means to uplift the exploited and the downtrodden and put an end to capitalism and to run the state on the basis of equality under the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, the followers of communism defined the system in the ways that suited them. The system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is only in words. In practice they are supporting the dictatorship of the clever and the shrewd. According to my understanding, Communism is only an attractive slogan to usurp power.'

Advancing his argument, he further said, 'Look! If communists have a house, they cannot think how to rebuild it to their liking. Their thinking is the house has to be razed from the very foundation and rebuild it. This is how they think and do, spending their labor and preserving the wealth of the nation. In my opinion, communism is a sword in the hands of the monkeys.'

I was shocked by Peter's statements. I did not fully agree with him on his view points. However, he expressed what he had understood about

communism. It was not important whether I agreed with him or not. In fact, I didn't support him on any of his view-points. I just went on listening.

'Had communism not been a sword in the hands of the monkeys, the head of my family wouldn't have been destroyed!' Peter finished the last sentence in a very serious and touching tone.

To destroy an established society means to put an end to a great number of human values and traditions. And it is an injustice to humanity. This fact must be realized by every philosopher wanting to change a society or every politician aiming at building a new society. If they did so, they will do justice, if they failed to do so, they will do injustice to humanity.

No matter how much the human sacrifice, how much the bloodshed, they do not care, if they can only fulfil their blind desire for power or to continue with their power for fulfilling the interests and selfishness of the minority power elite, and it is taken to be an act of humanistic and philanthropic welfare, whether such struggle was carried out by Lenin for political power, or by Stalin to communism in the name of communism.

A Chinese gentleman came to us and said something in Chinese and was about to leave. Peter drew his attention and introduced me to him. I also responded with 'hello' and showed my formality. He slowly moved towards the sofa in front of me and took his seat and made inquiries about me.

He was a full six feet tall with handsome physique. I guessed he also must be from North China. Hong Kong is a part of the Guangdong province of China. All the Chinese who have settled here in this part are Cantonese. The Cantonese are short and small in their physical stature. Though the Chinese people living in this region are short and small in their physical stature, this region of China is supposed to be the most developed region from all points of view compared to other regions. As this region had the transport facilities such as the railways and the seaports, Canton had been the main area of the Kuomintang party activities which then was the main political party to bring changes in China. Before this, the British had renamed the city of Guangzhou as Canton, and made tremendous influence on this region.

Peering into his face, I said, 'Maybe you belong to the community coming from the Shanghai region, Do you?'

'Yes!' he said in English, wearing an expression of surprise on his face. Then he asked about me. Within a while we were friends.

His name was Tangchau-Lai. But his Chinese name 'Tang' was now turned into the English name 'Tom'. He was known everywhere by the name 'Tom'. When I asked him why he had liked the name 'Tom' He said in reply, 'Hong Kong is under the British rule. The English want to see everything

"Anglicized". We profess Chinese religion. But other ceremonies and celebrations, like marriage, we have to carry on according to the English traditions. Otherwise we are taken to be uncivilized. We have to live in this society, under compulsion we have to adopt the English traditions. Therefore, 'Tom' is my compulsion, not my will.

I was given to know that Tom had come to Hong Kong just a few years back. Before his coming to Hong Kong, he used to work as a physician at one of the hospitals in Shanghai. He was a new doctor. And he had started his medical service as a physician not very long ago. But his father Dr. Tang Ai-Su had been serving as a physician in hospitals over the past three decades. And he was very famous. As the administrators of the Health Ministry decided which doctor should go where, his father was assigned to Harbin in the North China. The son was assigned to a hospital in Sangyang in the Guanshi province. When the father and son were assigned far apart, they naturally became dissatisfied with their assignments.

Nobody knows what time has in its store for him. Both the father and mother of Tangchau-Lai died within two years in Harbin. When the news of his parents' death reached Tangchau-Lai, his sorrow knew no bound. For some days he was unable to attend on his duty in the hospital. His absence was regarded as his default.

When his zeal to work was almost dead, he started to think either of going abroad or committing suicide. Hanging between these horns of dilemma, he had come to the city of Guang-zhou. He was in a big city, had no money, no relations and acquaintances, so he could not settle there. He, therefore, headed for the new city of Shenzhen which was then under construction.

Remembering the past incidence, he said, 'You know! It was not easy for me to come to Shenzhen. It was impossible. I came to Shenzhen with a group of laborers, posing myself as one of them.'

'What? Did you say you came to Shenzhen as a laborer?'

'Yes! Nobody can travel in and out of Shenzhen freely.'

'Then, why did you come to Shenzhen?'

'I wanted to come to Shenzhen just because the border is quite close from there.'

After working as a laborer for some days in Shenzhen, he met a man. He told him all about his misery. Taking pity on him, the man gave him the idea on how he could escape to Hong Kong. To escape from China to Hong Kong is like escaping from the clutch of a tiger.

'When I heard about Hong Kong, my desire to live revived again. And I started working day and night. I used to work with a group of laborers.

I worked with them, lived with them and ate with them,' Tom said with great cheerfulness.

'You are a doctor. How could you work as a laborer?'

'If there is enthusiasm welling up from inside for any work, you can do it. When any work is imposed on to you from above, your enthusiasm for work is killed. The work of a physician was a load upon me. But the work of a laborer was not, because it was not loaded from above, so I was enthusiastic about it. I have now drawn a conclusion that man is not a machine operated by others, but pushed forward by his own desire,' he said, drawing a philosophic conclusion on his experience.

'You are right!' I said, supporting his view.

'After a few weeks of work, I made a few Yuans. I used to get three Yuans a day. Out of three Yuans, I spent one for my meal and saved two Yuans every day.'

'How much money you needed then?'

'My need was hundred Yuans, that I saved before long.'

'What did you do with that money?'

'I spent that money on the plan to escape to Hong Kong. There were five of us. We collected five hundred Yuans- one hundred Yuans each of us. The amount of five hundred Yuans we gave to a local fisherman for helping us to escape to Hong kong. He told us to reach the sea-coast at ten in the night. We followed his suggestion and arrived at the beach in time.'

'Then what happened?' I asked curiously.

He went on, 'The fisherman tied a life-belt to the neck of each of us. Then examined the condition of the life-belt once again and said, 'Do you know how to swim? If you don't, look! you do like this with your hands,' he showed us practically how to move our hands in swimming. I did not know that I had to swim in the sea. The idea made me nervous'.

'You don't know how to swim?'

'No, I don't. But one has to swim five hours to reach the destination!'

'The fisherman told us to go swimming straight ahead for two hours. Then he said we would see a light on the right hand side. We were to follow that light and we arrived at Hong Kong.'

'There was nothing for us except to do or die. It was about half an hour since we arrived at the beach. So the fisherman said, "Now you should start. If you don't, it will be dawn very soon. Then the patrolling soldiers will find you out. Hurry up!" said he and pushed us into the sea.'

'Then what happened?' I said hurriedly in suspense.

'Oh! my goodness! I was just being taken away by the dark waves of water up and down..... up and down..... I didn't know where! My colleagues had left me far behind. We were shouting to each other to make each other know where we were. The fisherman standing on the shore warned us, "Don't make noise! Beware of the enemy! Take care of your life. You might be killed!" Now there was no alternative but to follow the direction of the fisherman. So we followed his direction and pushed ourselves ahead!'

'Did you arrive at your destination at the right time?'

'I arrived at the right time. But three of us didn't reach Hong Kong!'

'Where did they go then?'

'We were together till we were making the half- way. Then I myself was left alone. I was pushing ahead following the light. How I reached Hong Kong I don't know. When I was conscious and opened my eyes, I found myself in the police custody.

'What? Police custody?'

'Yes, in the police custody! They had arrested me as a criminal. I was conscious after hours of my arrest by the police. They presented me in the court as a criminal. After some days the court issued an order allowing me to stay in Hong Kong. I had a new life. I managed to get some money from the welfare fund and started a new business.'

Tangchau-Lai was a good doctor in China. But the same Tangchau-Lai is running a hotel here in Hong Kong, giving up his medical profession. He has changed not only his profession but his name also. He has become 'Tom' from 'Tang'.

Tom married a girl who came of a Chinese family that had come to Hong Kong during the revolution. Her name was Miyatang befitting the Chinese culture and tradition. But now she liked to be called 'Mary' than 'Miyatang' Tom and Mary are now living happily running a hotel.

After listening to Tom's full story, Peter said, 'Thousands, like Tom, who tried to escape communist China went down to the bottom of the sea, thousands have been shot dead by the communist bullets. Not only that, those captured while on the run were awarded capital punishment!'

I showed no immediate reaction to their statements, though their statements had already dumbfounded me! I had no idea that such heart-rendering incidents could take place in human life. I was listening to something which I had never heard, nor had any idea. However, there was no possibility

that these statements would change my opinion about new China. I was just listening and having information. That's all.

When something has to undergo change, or when something has to transform from one condition to another, internal conflict and struggle is inevitable. It is also inevitable that in the process of conflict and struggle, some elements will be destroyed and something new will emerge out of the destruction of the old. So it is but natural that the neo-proletarian revolution that is geared to build a new China will affect negatively in some ways. If a revolution does not affect some sections of the society, it will not deserve to be called a revolution. Revolution means radical change. Therefore, in a revolution everything is justified.

What the revolutionaries may think just, may turn out to be unjust to others. If such pitfalls could be avoided by the revolutionaries, they can draw respect from society. If they failed to do so, there can be counter-revolution. It depends upon to the modus operandi of the revolutionaries.

Peter was protesting, maybe knowing the realities, or without knowing the realities. However, there was no difference in the experiences of both the families. They had shared the same fate.

Peter's complaint was that in his opinion the Chinese revolutionaries who were establishing a political system for the good of the poor and the exploited must not have discriminated and destroyed one class for the good of another. Instead, they should have embraced all the classes within their communist system. It was possible, such was Peter's typical argument.

'The way the revolutionaries of neo-proletarian cultural revolution are using the intellectuals and experts as instruments of the development of the country is not appropriate. Man is born not just for the development of his country alone. If the state puts such a policy into practice, human consciousness cannot tolerate it and there will be revolt against the state,' this was the argument of Tom based on his own experience.

Advancing my opinion to Tom, I said, 'The goal of cultural revolution is to streamline all the diverse cultural traditions in China into one national culture. Under such a national culture, people speak the same language, maintain the same philosophy of life and melt into one national community. To build such a society is the goal of the revolution. You should realize the essence of the revolution. The sufferings that you had to undergo are your personal matter which is certainly a pity!'

Tom being busy pouring out his own complaint, said, 'I have a son. I must tell him our ancestral stories. I must teach him our community language and other cultural traditions. Even when I fail to hand down our cultural

traditions to him as I should, I have already done so through my blood which he has shared with me and with which he has come into this world.'

I did not comment on his statements. I just listened. He went on, 'No revolution can be brought about with the opinion of the masses, because revolution is always launched by the minority against the majority. The decisive role, therefore, is played not by the masses but the leading elite revolutionaries. Therefore, the change that is brought about by such elite revolutionaries cannot be permanent. In due course such a change is bound to collapse.'

We were attracted by the open statements of Tom. In one way he sounded right. According to his version, there are fifty seven communities and languages in China. Every community has its own language, religious and cultural traditions. Therefore, there is no similarity in these matters between the communities. To try to streamline into one cultural system in such a vast country like China with such cultural and communal diversities is only a fanatical adventure born out of the mentality washed by Mao-Tsetung's thoughts. In reality, it is not possible, he further said with certainty, 'The Chinese societies will rise up to re-establish their old religious and cultural traditions. Such is the merit in the Chinese character.'

In support of Tom Peter said, 'When man is born, he inherits the character of his ancestors in his mind and brain, and in his physical features also he is like the duplicate of his forefathers and represents his forefathers in the society. To try to change such a truth is like trying to cover the sun with one's palm. It cannot, therefore, be acceptable to the people. What is acceptable to the people has survived and will continue from century to century.'

Tom and Peter are both from Shanghai. They showed similarity not only in their nature, temperament, language and culture on the provincial basis, but they were also in the same boat, struck by the same sword and gathered same painful experiences in their life. Therefore, they had good relation. It was getting pretty late but Tom didn't seem to be moving. As Tom had seen the conditions both before and after the revolution in China he had gathered plenty of information on the revolution.

Tom went on, 'There is a writer named Lhushun. And Lhushun is the vanguard of the revolution in China. In the campaign led by him they had ridiculous slogans such as, 'Down with the old morality! Long live the new morality!' These slogans were heard in China from the nineteen thirties onwards. But nobody could understand the meaning of these slogans.'

Peter said in a satirical tone, 'Today the communist leaders have begun to understand what morality and literature mean!'

Though our conversation was growing interesting, as it was getting late, I requested Tom to postpone the conversation until the next meeting. He realized and wanted to move. Before leaving he gave me his address. I also gave him my visiting card. Promising to meet again and have more discussion, he left.

I also wanted to go to my room. So, taking leave of Peter I said, 'Peter, today I gathered plenty of information about your community, society and China. You and your friend Tom have such a wealth of information. If we got another opportunity we would sit and discuss again.'

I went into my room, took my seat on a chair in one corner of the room and thought, 'How many Peng Sanglus must have metamorphosed into Peters for their existence and how many Tang Chau-Lais must have been transformed into Toms here in Hong Kong with their new life!'

These thousands of human beings here in Hong Kong must have been carrying on their life with the border of painful feelings of home-sickness and nostalgia. Because they are cut off from their society and their ancestral home, how much tears they must be shedding in their private rooms! 'Yes! when I was thinking and imagining on these thoughts, my own heart was filled with sorrow!

Chapter 3

After a few days' stay in Hong Kong I returned to Kathmandu. My investigation continued because of my interest in it. One day I left Kathmandu for Pokhara. One of my friends was working in the Damauli section of the construction of Kathmandu - Pokhara highway. I decided to stay there with him for one day.

Chinese government has in a significant way assisted my country for building roads and establishing industries. Following the completion of the highway that connects Kathmandu with the trading town of Zhangmu, the Chinese were now busy building the Naubise Pokhara highway that connects Kathmandu with Pokhara. As the Chinese are helping Nepal in her development, Nepalese people like them very much. However, the citizens of one country can have no specific relationship with those of another country.

The engineers and technicians engaged in building the Naubise - Pokhara highway had a camp near the Damauli Bazar. In one section of the camp the Chinese were staying and the other section was occupied by the Nepalese. The head of the Nepalese group was a Nepalese engineer Mr. Kailash Man whose guest I was for a few days. There were altogether twenty-five people in the Nepalese group comprising ten overseers. About the same number of personnel were in the Chinese group. Though the Chinese and the Nepalese were staying together in the same camp, their customs and ways of living were poles apart.

I had started from Kathmandu quite early in the morning. As the road was under construction, I could not go fast. I reached Damauli in the evening. So there was nothing special to do that day. However I tried to get some information about the camp that evening. Kailash Man had made a program

for sightseeing around the area in the next morning. The program was made by Kailash Man himself. I had no idea about the area and I had gone there just to stay for a few nights. So I had better to go along with the program of Mr. Kailash Man.

As we had to start at eight O'clock in the morning, I got up at six and finished my morning business. A jeep came to pick us up. We got on the jeep, Kailash Man and myself had headed towards the construction site. After about half an hour the jeep stopped at one place. There a Chinese was supervising the construction work smartly.

'Nihau! (Hello!)' said Kailash Man to his Chinese counterpart, an engineer himself, and got out of the jeep.

In response the Chinese also said, 'Nihau! Nihau!'. He was just fulfilling his formality. His attention was engaged in the work. Actually he was giving more importance to the work than to the coming of Kailash Man and his jeep.

We were there for about half an hour standing close to the Chinese engineer. But he didn't pay any attention towards us. He was an engineer of Kailash Man's status. After a while, feeling a little bit embarrassed, Kailash Man said, addressing the Chinese man, 'Mr. zhang!' pointing toward me, 'This is my friend from Kathmandu.'

Turning towards me abruptly he said, with a look of surprise, 'Hello! You from Kathmandu?'

No sooner had I said 'Yes!' than his attention was engaged in his work. We also began to pay our attention to his work silently. The Chinese was supervising the work of a team of Nepalese workers. He had picked up a few Nepalese words also. He could say in Nepali 'good work' 'bad work', 'little man', 'big man' and so on. He was supervising the Nepalese workers in such a way that I was surprised at his motivating capacity. My friend, who is an engineer of the same status, was loafing around, his hands in the pockets of his pants.

These two men from their respective countries had gone there with the same duty and responsibility. The Nepalese team engineer was posing himself as a lord, which was out of place for him, whereas the Chinese team engineer was engaged in his work with his mind and body.

In the Chinese team there was no difference of status. An engineer, an overseer, an ordinary technician, or a driver-all were equal. In dressing, lodging, food and other facilities and manners they seemed to be equal. But in the Nepalese team there was a world of difference so far as status was concerned. A Nepalese engineer poses himself as a boss, as an intellectual, as

a very civilized person, whereas ordinary technicians such as machine operators, drivers, etc. think themselves as stupid, poor and uncivilized people. Thus on the basis of status, there is class difference, and they who hold high positions they do not work, or they are not supposed to work. Such is the mentality of those who hold high positions. On the other hand, those holding low positions have developed the mentality that they can earn their living only by manual work. So it is clear that there is class difference here which is unjust.

The personnel engaged in a certain project, no matter who holds what position, have equal duty and responsibility on the basis of work - division until the project is finished. They have to complete the project by working hard on equal footing. If they forget this moral truth the people holding higher positions exploit those holding lower positions. Because of this tendency and tradition, people holding high positions are going still higher up and those holding lower positions are going lower down. This factor is responsible not only for the failure of projects, but also for creating abnormal conditions in the society.

When an ordinary citizen earns an engineering degree, he thinks himself to be an extraordinary individual and takes himself to be far above the ordinary citizen. A degree holding individual thinks that he should not, or need not, do manual works. Development of difference in mental attitude with the difference of official position is not natural. However, we take it just for granted that the difference in official position is the difference in humanity itself which is wrong and unjust.

Kailash Man and myself were busy watching the Nepalese laborers doing their works. The Chinese engineers were busier than we were, working along side with the laborers. All were busy in their works as the working day had begun and all were in a workaday spirit.

One unskilled worker was carrying basket - loads of rocks on his back from down the river - bed. All of a sudden he slipped the stone he stepped upon and fell off. The rocks he was carrying went rolling from his back down towards the river. With the rocks went rolling the man down also. All were just watching helplessly, I was shocked. I cried out, 'Help! Help!' and a shock - wave ran through all the faces but no one came forward. They were just looking at each other listlessly. But when and how the Chinese engineer reached the laborer to catch hold of him nobody could tell. All of a sudden everybody could see the Chinese engineer was carrying the man in his arms. I watched the scene in amazement.

I could readily realize that Kailash Man was taking about the incident very lightly. I could see that he was not reacting at all when he actually saw the man falling off, whereas everybody else was wearing a sorry expression on their face.

Kailash Man said in a very light manner, 'Such incidents take place everyday. Let's go to another area.'

I immediately reacted, 'What did you say? Do you think it to be an ordinary incident? And such incidents take place everyday, you said?'

Kailash Man had no answer to my questions. As his response to my questions had been so light that it made no sense and had no worth at all. However, unwillingly I was forced to take his response having no worth to me. He said, 'In the works of road construction it is but natural that workers are hurt. And we have arrangement for their medical treatment. Don't worry!'

'Had the Chinese not acted so quickly, the man would have been dead,' I said, giving vent to my sorry feelings.

'It is useless to think this or that may happen in such incidents. What we should think is that we should avoid such incidence from taking place any more,' he gave his opinion about the incident in such a simple manner.

It is only natural that land - slides take place along the river banks. That's why they build retaining walls with wire - nets filled - up with rocks. If there is any mistake, or defect, or negligence, in such techniques the whole thing would go down to the river. And in these matters Chinese engineers and technicians are better than the Nepalese. So the Chinese technicians are preferred to Nepalese ones in such technology. It is clear for anyone to see.

Nepalese technicians and technocrats spend their time and energy thinking about commission or their own necessities. This I was given to understand when I came into contact with Kailash Man and had opportunity to be in his company for some time.

The laborer who was hurt in his fall was carried up from the spot of accident. He was hurt on his leg. There was some bleeding and he was in need of first aid treatment immediately. Realizing the condition of the man, Mr. Zhang said that the man should be taken to the camp. There was no other vehicle except the jeep of Kailash Man. Mr. Zhang was glancing around-if there was any other vehicle standing or any vehicle was plying on the road for a lift. When he didn't see any vehicle around, he came to Kailash Man and said in broken English, 'Mister where going? If get transport, send please quick! I take the man to the camp.'

I was about to say, 'You can give this jeep,' when Kailash Man said immediately, 'I have to go and observe No.40 culvert. I will send the dump truck here immediately and you can send the man to the camp by that truck.'

Kailash Man didn't think it necessary to give his own jeep for the needy man. I wanted to say something but didn't and Mr. Zhang also couldn't ask Kailash Man to give his own jeep for taking the injured man to the camp.

Kailash Man gave me gestures to move towards the jeep. I followed him silently.

I was sitting in the jeep in silence. Kailash Man drew my attention talking about the working habits and manners of the Chinese. He said, 'These Chinese know nothing but work, care nothing but work. They work...work..work, from morning till evening. Mr. Zhang is an engineer of my rank. But he doesn't mind to work along with the unskilled laborers.'

'This is good!' I said, giving my opinion.

'How can you say this is good?' What! An engineer should carry rocks, you mean?

'No, I don't mean you should carry rocks!'

'These Chinese are in a foreign country. They can do anything. No problem. But we are natives. We have friends and relatives. What will they say if we carry rocks?'

'I can't say you are wrong! But....', I just stopped here, as I did not want to pick up an argument with Kailash Man.

Kailash Man continued with his view, 'Let alone the engineer, even our supervisor or head of the laborers does not like to work with shovel.'

I wasn't impressed by the statements of Kailash Man, because there was nothing new in them for me. Our social structure is like that. It is plagued by narrow mentality and thoughts, and beliefs of the low and the high, the poor and the rich, the educated and the illiterate, and the like. In order to build an independent, free, clean and free-of-exploitation society, it is necessary that right kind of social guidance and leadership must come forward.

An underdeveloped country like ours lacks in roads and communication facilities. In the name of industry, this country has been transformed into a center of black business of some people of foreign origin on the one hand, and on the other, responsible government bureaucrats are busy in privatizing the public property and capital. Under such a state of affairs, how can this nation do any good for itself? A drastic change is called for to remedy this pitiable state of affairs. But how? And by what philosophy such a drastic change is to be brought about? This is the question which is worrying every thinking person in this country today.

All the thoughts that came up in my mind, I couldn't express to Kailash Man. Besides, what was the use of telling him? He didn't understand. Even though he understood, I couldn't believe he would ever apply them in practice. So it was only a wastage of time and energy to pick up an argument with him. So I didn't say anything. I was just going along the road under construction glancing on the workers and the supervisors busy at work.

Disturbing my mental concentration, Kailash Man said, 'Do you know how the project of this Naubisc-Pokhara Highway has come about?'

'Yes, I know.'

'What do you know? Tell me.'

'This is a part of the infrastructure in which the Chinese Government is helping us for the development of this country.'

'Not only for our country's development, but for their political interests primarily', he further goes on according to his understanding, 'Sunauli-Pokhara Highway was constructed by the Government of India. So it is felt as a necessity by the Chinese to build this road because this is the nearest point which joins the Chinese Border with Pokhara. Therefore, priority has been given to the construction of this road. Otherwise the construction of the East-West Highway is much more important.'

He further said in this context, 'Look! Any country that comes to help us pays more attention to its own interest than our need of development. The Tribhuvan Highway is a clear example for you to understand. This highway was not built by the Government of India for the development of our country. It was built from the military strategic point of view primarily. Therefore, the so-called international development cooperations and aids are more motivated by their political interest than by our need of development. This we must not forget.'

I did not see any point in reporting the statements of Kailash Man. I therefore went on listening to him. According to his point of view, any big country, no matter whatever its ideology, is an imperial power center in relation to a small country and does always try to make a small country its satellite to move around its power-center.

We discussed such political and practical matters on our way. I was in agreement with him on some points of his statements. On others I just listened to him. I preferred to enjoying the scenery around me to arguing with him. We suddenly stopped at a point. All aboard the jeep started getting down. I also got down. Kailash Man started towards a man in clean dress standing at a distance instead of going over to the work-site for observation. The man also moved forward to meet Kailash Man.

I myself moved towards the work-site where the works of culvert construction were going on. I wanted to gather information on the structure of culverts. But there were none who could supply me such information. Kailash Man was talking to the man, gesturing with his hands, and wearing a worrisome expressions on his face.

Later I came to know that the man was the contractor of the culvert construction which Kailash Man had gone for observation, and we were supposed to take our lunch at the contractor's camp. So we proceeded towards the camp of the contractor.

The contractor Kala Nath, appeared to be very happy getting the opportunity to receive the engineer.

Sweet - spoken, very courteous to the engineer, always folding his hands while talking, Kala Nath was trying to drive his points on the loss he had to incur in the contract. If Kailash Man helped, the loss could be minimized.

'These Chinese are always poking into matters such as how much cement and how much iron rods I put into my construction. These guys are really destroying me!' said Kala Nath, 'Yesterday I had to pull down the whole thing and rebuild it. I pray sir, you should help me!'

'O.K.! Don't worry! I will help you!' Kailash Man consoled Kala Nath in a bossy manner.

Though it was a project site, there was no shortage of food and drink. There were two kinds of meat dishes and plenty of beer and whisky. Kailash Man drank beer with his lunch, but he gave the whisky to the driver for the night. After the lunch we moved on.

We were on a sort of sightseeing trip almost the whole day, but we returned to the camp in time before the evening. When we arrived at the camp there were not many souls there. But with the falling of the evening, the atmosphere of the camp was taking to gaiety and merriment. The generator in the Chinese camp started and lights were on all around. And people were busy organizing evening programs.

I came to know that in the Chinese camp they put up film-shows every evening. After dinner all the people who wanted to attend the film - shows, gathered at the Chinese camp. Kailash Man was thinking to fix our evening program according to the usual functions held in the Chinese camp. So Kailash Man said, 'Shall we watch the Chinese documentary film in the evening?'

'What film do they show?'

'Well, about China and the Chinese. What else could it be?' Kailash Man put it in a simplistic manner.

I accepted Kailash Man's proposal for the film show. According to the program, we had to take our dinner little earlier, so we did. After dinner, we proceeded towards the Chinese camp.

There were some hundred and odd people from the neighboring villages gathered already at the camp to watch the film show. The film show

which was put up on the open stage was actually meant for the entertainment of the Chinese, I was told. When we arrived on the spot, some chairs were placed in between the projector and the screen. And we were told to sit on those chairs.

After we were seated, some Chinese gentlemen also arrived.

'Nihau! Wan Sang- hau!' greeting us in Chinese which means 'Good - evening!' the Chinese gentlemen also took their seats. After a while, the film started. I didn't understand the film as it was in Chinese language and I felt nobody except Chinese understood. This was the first time that I was watching a Chinese film, I was feeling bored!

Perhaps Kailash Man had realized that I was feeling bored. So he started talking about the film.

'The story of this film goes back to nineteen twenty seven when Mao - Tsetung was organizing the workers and peasants into the Red Army for the communist revolution.'

Now I was getting some idea. I began to understand. Kailash Man explained in his subdued voice, 'Look! The first group of the Red Army was organized with the peasants of Hunan Province, the mine workers and the defectors from the Kuomintang army. These are the three sources from which men were drawn to be recruited into the Red Army. Likewise, men from the peasant communities of Fing-Syang, Liu-Yang and Lo-ling and the major part of defenders of Uhan, who had turned into rebels, had joined the Red Army.

Now I began to recognize the youthful Mao-Tsetung shown in the film. Suddenly he fell into the hands of the Kuomintang soldiers. The soldiers dragged him beating and kicking. They tortured him inhumanly. But the youthful Mao did not seem to get disheartened and discouraged. Perhaps, some scheme to punish him severely was being worked out.

I wanted to get more clear view from Kailash Man. He explained slowly, 'When Mao was organizing the mine workers of Han-Yan he was arrested by the Kuomintang soldiers. Mao was being led by the Kuomintang soldiers and his very life was in danger, he somehow escapes from the hands of the Kuomintang soldiers and hides himself in the jungle. With great difficulties he saves his life and walking through rocky mountains surreptitiously for a long time he somehow reaches a peasant's house where he takes his shelter.'

I got the understanding of the film clearly. Taking shelter in a peasant's house, Mao tells them about his troubles and helplessness. With their help he moves to another district and from there he somehow reaches the area where a group of the Red Army men is stationed. Where I imagine he regains

his power. It was so in reality. I was right when Kailash said that Mao reorganized the Red Army headed by himself as its chairman and appointing Yu- Satu as its commander.

'Yes! I now understand' I said softly.

Mao's Red Army pushed ahead in a form of peasant revolt, undergoing great deal of sufferings in the fight against the Kuomintang army. During the battle a number of Red Army soldiers along with Yu-Satu went over to join the Kuomintang soldiers and again went over to join the Red Army. Such is the story of the film.

Lastly, victory of Mao-Tsetung was proclaimed all over the country. Mao-Tsetung was taken to be the only friend of the workers and peasants. With this message the film came to an end. This was the substance of the explanation that Kailash Man was making to me.

Lights were on all around. The projector operator was preparing to put in another film. I myself looked for Mr. Zhang, but I didn't see him. With similar face-cuts the Chinese were difficult to recognize and there was language problem.

In the meantime, a Chinese gentleman who spoke English came to take his seat by me, greeting me with 'Hello!' I responded him and began to talk with him in English. Kailash Man introduced me to the Chinese gentleman. I came to know he was an interpreter. I was happy to find him seated by me.

The second film began. This film also was related to Mao-Tsetung. At least, it was clear for me to understand.

I understood that Mao was working for organizing the Red Army. Further I asked the interpreter to explain to me. He said, explaining the story of the film, 'The story says Wang-Chuo and Yan-Wen Chai joined the Red Army and took a number of cities, defeating the Kuomintang army. With the efforts of these two heroes the number of the Red Army also increased considerably. Later, there were suspicions on their character and behavior. So a group of the Red Army itself meted out capital punishment to them.'

I felt very sorry for the two men who were punished with death who had fought for the Red Army so heroically. But why? A question arises in my mind. but who is to answer my question?

As the film was in pieces, every half an hour the operator had to change the film. In the meantime we had chance for a little bit of conversation. The interpreter seated by me had by now been introduced to me. His name was Liu-Shyan.

The film began. I ask Liu-Shyan about the background story of the film. He started interpreting softly.

'The story is about the beginning of the revolution. The events shown are those taking place in the region of Feu-Chan. Lilie-Shan was a thinker and a revolutionary hero. He was born in Hunan. He studied in France. When he returned, he presented himself as a communist leader in Han-Khao and Shanghai, and he had done good works. He was trying to popularize his own 'ism'- 'Lilie - Shanism' among the people. But considering it against the interest of the workers and peasants, Lilie - Shanism was suppressed by the Red Army.

'Supporters of Lilie-Shanism were resorting to gangsterism and vandalism. Going to the villages, they looked for and plundered noble families: They pitted one group of workers and peasants against the other. Thus they spread chaos and terror among the people.'

In the way of interpretation, Liu-Shyan told me, 'At that time Fang Yu-Shiang and Chiang Kai-Shaik were engulfed in the civil war. And Lilie-Shan was trying to take advantage of the civil war as such activities of Lilie-Shan were considered as anti-workers and anti-peasants. Thus Lilie-Shanism was suppressed.'

While I was watching the film, I naturally thought that when one watches such films filled with excitements it must give relaxation and renewed spirit for the work of the next day mentally and physically.

In the mean time, Mr. Zhang arrived. Greeting us with 'Nihau!' he took his seat near us and said, 'The laborer who had hurt himself today, one of his legs is broken. I have sent him to Pokhara hospital for treatment.'

'Oh! He broke his leg?' I said, feeling sorry for the man.

Mr. Zhang said, 'The man was sent to Pokhara Hospital after a Chinese doctor examined him and found one of his legs broken. Now I want to know if it is possible to give the man some financial compensation, Mister Kailash. What do you say?'

But Kailash Man took the issue very lightly and said, 'Who can afford to give compensation? We don't have fund for this.'

'That I know. But if you want, you can manage it. You can get some fund from the contractor and give it to the man as compensation.' Zhang said.

But Kailash Man thought, the matter not worth the trouble. He tried to evade the matter. In the meantime, film started.

The film showed beautiful scenery - scenery of rolling green fields, groups of farmers laughing, singing and dancing. Happy and cheerful farmers were seen watching fruit trees laden with ripe fruits as good results of their labor. All of this was the indication of the development that China had achieved. The film was about the village development programme. So the film

gave good examples of the development achieved in the Chinese villages and the rising standard of living of the villagers.

Among the spectators, one shouted loudly, - 'Oh! China is a real good country! How nice crop fields! What an atmosphere! Everybody cleanly dressed, everybody is cheerful and happy! Oh! how beautiful!'

The viewers of the films were people from the neighboring villages. They enjoyed watching the films, they looked to be very excited and happy at the film shows. At the same time they seemed to be impressed by the development in China. In his village no matter how hard he worked, he could not make his crop fields as good as in China. Maybe, by such comparison the man was shouting out his frustration. Everybody was looking towards him. Our attention also was naturally drawn towards him. At this very moment the film came to an end.

Lights were on everywhere. Everybody was getting up from their places. Villagers started towards the camp. We were also preparing to move. In the meantime the Chinese interpreter said, gesturing, 'Let's see our camp also!'

Our group moved forward. We arrived at the camp. In the foreground of the camp, there was set up a huge portrait of Mao-Tsetung which could be viewed from all around. And in front of the house, there were some chairs. We took our seats on the chairs. Liu-Shyan who was seated by my side, disappeared for some time.

I started Kailash Man telling my experience, 'This place looks different. How is it?'

'The Chinese style of living is different from ours,' said Kailash Man.

'What a pleasant atmosphere here!' I said repeatedly, - 'What a pleasant atmosphere!'

'Yes! See the Chinese style of living. That's why it looks so different to you,' said Kailash Man, 'Everything new momentarily appears pleasant to human beings'. This statement was Kailash Man's experience.

My experience was also like that of Kailash Man. It was so pleasant because it was new. The whole setting-up, the whole atmosphere was of Chinese style. In that place only the Chinese were living. As there were only Chinese, the place looked like a mini-China town.

Liu-Shan was seen coming towards us with a man along with him. When they approached near us, they greeted Kailash Man with 'Nihau!' and came to me. Liu-Shan introduced the gentleman to me. I shook hands with the gentleman for the sake of formality. He was the Commander of the camp. He pinned up a badge of Mao on my coat. I accepted it cheerfully. Then he said

something in Chinese. It was instantly interpreted by the interpreter, 'Perhaps you have come to see our project. We welcome you! If there is anything that we can help you, please let's know.'

'Yes, I have come for sightseeing as well as to see you as our friends,' I said in a breath.

He again said something in Chinese. Liu-Shan interpreted it, 'I am happy to meet you! I welcome you here on behalf of all my Chinese friends. We peoples of our two countries are great and close friends.'

The commander was expressing himself in a formal and diplomatic manners. I also responded his gestures and sentiments in the same manner. After sometime, we took our leave from the Chinese friends and moved towards our camp.

There was a small house meant for guests. I went into the room shown to me. Into the room, came along with Kailash Man a young man of about 25 years of age. His name was Khaga Raj. I saw a Mao badge pinned up on the left side of his chest as on my own chest. He stared at my badge locket but said nothing. I also was silent. After a while, he got out of the room.

Now in the room were left Kailash Man and myself. Touching on the same Chinese context, Kailash Man said, 'These Chinese are very clever and smart people. Finding that you are my friend coming from Kathmandu, the camp commander came to meet you, and with sweet words wanted to make impressions on you.'

'Why? Doesn't the camp commander do normally meet ordinary people like me?'

'No. He can't. He is the king of this camp. Nobody can refute him and it is out of the rules of this camp. Even the Chinese who live in this camp should have to speak to him according to his position.'

'What do you mean?' I said.

'Though you see them all alike, there are different ranks and positions. There are engineers, overseers, machine operators, drivers, carpenters, architects as well as cooks. There are also medical doctors', said Kailash Man.

'But all are dressed alike, why?'

'This is their special feature. The dress that they put on in uniform is called the Mao suit. To give the psychological impressions of equality this dress has been popularized among all the people from the administrators down to the workers and peasants.'

'I think this is good!' I appreciated the dress for equality.

'Equality is something that should be shown in behavior, not in material things. By my observation of their behavior, I do not agree that they maintain the principle of equality in practice. I have seen enough of it in Moscow. It is only in slogan, not in practice,' said Kailash Man with frustration.

Kailash Man had earned his degree in engineering from Soviet Union. And he himself had maintained communist ideology. So he knew well what equality meant. I think he still maintained communist ideology. But I had no idea of the limits of his stand. However, the impressions that I gathered through the whole day of our togetherness seemed that communism had lost its charm for Kailash Man.

He was telling about an incident that had taken place sometime ago, he said, 'Look! this commander treated a degree holding engineer just as his slave. I saw it with my own eyes.'

An engineer named Li-Fang was given such a treatment by this commander that he could neither smile for a moment, nor cry by opening his heart. After a month's isolation, finally he was sent back to Beijing via Kathmandu. I still remember what he said about this commander. This herdsman was not a human being but a devil! That's why this guy had neither reason, nor intellect. A man should treat another man like a human being not like an animal. As Li -Fung was a rebellious type of person, he never came to terms with the camp commander.

Kailash Man was pouring out his experiences about matters which he didn't agree with or he didn't like. For me these formed a new experiences. So I was growing more and more interested. But as it was already late in the night, all of us preferred to retire into our rooms and rest.

Next morning, tea arrived at my room. After a while Khaga Raj came into the room. I gestured him towards the chair to take his seat. He took his seat feeling somewhat uneasy. He had taken me for a communist propagandist, because he had seen yesterday a Mao badge pinned up on my chest. I could feel this when he started talking. However, he had not yet asked about my identity who I was and what I was doing. He only asked about the films. He said, 'How did you like the films of yesterday night?'

'What is the specific point of your question? Entertainment or something else?' I put up a counter question.

'Well! I mean both - entertainment as well as another point of view,' he placed his curiosity flatly before me.

There was more of Maoism than communism in the films. And there was much more effort to prove the superiority and necessity of Maoism than of communism. There were also indications in the films of new trends of

development. So, it was not difficult to understand that the films were more for propaganda than for entertainment. I wanted to know the points of view of Khaga Raj. I said, 'How did you like yourself? You have been watching these films over a long time.'

He was also not sure about his opinion. However, he hesitatingly, tried to give his opinion. He said, 'I think I got opportunities to gain knowledge about China and Chinese revolution.'

'What else did you gain?' I asked again.

'I gained knowledge about the Chinese Red Army, I gained knowledge about the Chinese cultural revolution. And I also gained knowledge about the sufferings that Mao-Tsetung had to undergo. I also learned about the recent achievements of China's development,' Khaga Raj was putting before me whatever he thought, he knew in a simple manner.

'As you say, you have gained knowledge about the Chinese revolution. Does this knowledge come just from watching the films?'

'Yes, from the films as well as from the interpreter. I liked their political system.' With this statement he was drawn closer to me. He put up a number of questions. I answered them as best as I could. He also wanted to get information about communism from me. I said he could ask such questions also.

He said, 'What is communism actually?'

'According to Karl Marx, Communism means the liberation of the proletariat,' I said.

'Who is the proletariat?' his curiosity heightened.

'Proletariat is the class of society which sells his labor for livelihood under necessity and compulsion. There is no alternative to it for livelihood.'

'How does the proletariat come into existence?'

'The Industrial Revolution of Europe is the causal factor that gives birth to the proletariat. When the exploitation of the mill workers by the mill owners was too much, this exploited class of workers was called as the proletariat'.

'What does bourgeois mean?' He was seeking definition of the terminology which was very often used in communism.

I said, 'Bourgeois' means, according to Marxist philosophy, the class in the society which, historically, replaces the feudal aristocracy and becomes itself the ruling class. It also means the modern industrial capitalist, "petty capitalist" or "petty bourgeois" and it also means the "middle class" in the social system. Bourgeoisie is supposed to be living on the labor of the proletariat.'

'Can you tell me about Marx also?' He said. He was trying to draw from me as much information as he could. I also did not mind giving him information what I knew.

'Karl Marx was born in 1818 in a Jewish family in Germany. He studied law, philosophy and history at the universities of Bonn and Berlin, and later took up the study of economics. Afterwards he studied journalism. At that time in the countries of Europe industrial development was afoot, and actually, it was the beginning of Industrial Revolution. On the other hand, the condition of the labor class was becoming worse and capitalism was on the rise.'

I went on, 'Marx took up the cause of the labor class and started collecting information on the conditions of this class and published in his journal. At this time he met Friedrich Engels. Engels was a son of wealthy German industrialist. They together developed hitherto unknown ideas on society, labor and economy which they put in the "Communist Manifesto" in 1848 and introduced the philosophy of communism to the world community. This very philosophy of communism is known today as Marxism.'

He was listening to me very seriously. No sooner had I finished than he put up another query. He said, 'Do you please tell me something about Leninism?'

'It was under the leadership of Lenin that the Russian Communist Revolution of 1917 had been successful. It was Lenin who took for the communist party the state power in the world for the first time. It was Lenin who presented Marxism as a political force in the world. So Lenin is taken to be as the architect of the communist philosophy who put this philosophy into practice.'

I continued, 'Lenin was the leader of the Bolshevik Communist party. Whatever policy and strategy he developed before and after the 1917 Russian revolution and the role that he played for the revolution is collectively called "Leninism". Lenin, with his charismatic personality and resolute ideology, gave new directions to Marxism without meddling with the fundamental principles of Marxism. He also developed the theories and techniques on how to organize the party, on what should be the form and features of the party, and principles and techniques of leadership for revolution and the like, all collectively called "Leninism".'

In the meantime, Kailash Man came into the room. Both of us remained silent. I wanted to know the purpose of his coming. He let us know that he had come to fix the day's program. He said, 'Now I am going about my duty. I come back for lunch. We will take our lunch together. In the meantime, you can go for sightseeing to the Damauli Bazaar and come back for lunch.'

I accepted his proposition and said, 'When will you be back?'

'12 O'clock'.

'O.K.!' I said, 'I shall be back by that time taking a look around the Damauli Bazaar.'

'Fine!', he said.

After fixing the day's program, Kailash Man left us. I then started planning my sightseeing trip to Damauli Bazaar with Khaga Raj. Khaga Raj was also free, so he accepted to give me his company.

After taking care of our morning business, we started on our sight-seeing trip to Damauli. Damauli Bazaar was a new settlement. As the District Headquarters of Bandipur shifted to the place recently, one could see unusual activities there. Villagers from far and near came there for buying and selling things. So the bazaar was busy and active. But, as it was a new settlement, and new houses were under construction, so were the roads. For this reason, the bazaar didn't look well-organized.

Khaga Raj said, 'Do you know Ram Raj?'

'Well! I think, I have heard about him,' I said in reply.

'I thought, you knew him,' Khaga Raj dumped his faith on me.

'May be! 'I didn't want to add more.

'Should we go to see him? Ram Raj has come to live here for the last many months. But he is underground. Nobody knows his whereabouts. Even the government knows nothing about him. Only camp commander Zhan-Sen Li and me know where he is!' he said.

'All right, let's see him!', I said in acceptance of his proposition.

Khaga Raj and me reached the second floor flat of a small house. We found his room closed. When Khaga Raj announced his name, the door opened. The man in the room gestured us to go in and returned to the small bed set in one of the corners of the room. We introduced ourselves to each other in a formal manner. He was Ram Raj, a staunch follower of communist ideology, still more, a follower of Mao thoughts as well as its propagandist. He was also a pioneer of communist movement in Nepal. We started our conversation. After Khaga Raj told him about my background as a follower of communist ideology, Ram Raj tried to motivate me to work for the Neo-People's Democracy in this country.

There was a small portrait of Mao put up on the wall in the room. There was also a book-shelf full of books on China in English, Hindi and Nepali. There was also a big pile of Illustrated China magazine in Hindi. The setting of the room and its atmosphere indicated that he was supported profusely by China.

Khaga Raj said, 'May I know, under whose leadership are you working for the communist movement in Nepal?'

'Well! I should say I have no leader. I am my own leader.' I said.

'You are right!' said Ram Raj. 'We communists are self-motivated and self-inspired for our devotion to works. Its causal factor is our own experience of inequality and exploitation and our revolt against these evils. When we devote ourselves to liberate the masses from these evils, then we deserve to be called Communists.' Ram Raj was supporting me in sweet words.

When he was informed that I was residing in the camp in my sojourn, he asked whether I met the camp commander. I told him about my meeting with the camp commander and let him know that the commander was a nice gentleman. Cutting me short, he said, 'Did you have some political talk also?'

'No, We didn't,' I said.

'Are you going to meet him again? Do you have any such program?,' He said.

'No', I said, and I was wondering why he was asking such questions with such keen curiosity. With some sort of suspicion in my mind toward his attitude I said, 'Perhaps, I may meet him this evening.'

Now as his suspicion was cleared by my statement, he said, 'This commander is a political leader. If you are in need of any cooperation from him, you better meet him.'

'You mean the commander of these Chinese who have come here as technicians is not a technician himself?' I said, expressing my ignorance on the matter.

No sooner had I expressed myself than he became careful and seemed to be somewhat shocked. At the same time, he was without enough courage to answer my question. In the mean time, breaking the silent atmosphere in the room, Khaga Raj said, 'So far, the leader of any Chinese technical team working in this country has been nontechnical. Only the second leader has been technical with the necessary know-how and understanding of the works of the team.'

Ram Raj tried to divert the course of our conversation. But, Khaga Raj, on his part, was trying to close the gap that had tended to develop between Ram Raj and myself. At this point of conflict, I also tried to fit myself into somewhere so that the situation might be in my favor. So I said, 'In the way the Chinese people work and are devoted to their work, it is natural for us to imagine how it has achieved such a great development. All of this is the result of Mao's thoughts of Neo-People's Democracy.'

'You are right!,' Ram Raj heaved a long sigh as he supported my opinion.

'The Chinese people are always together, they walk together, eat together, sit together. How pleasant it is! What a unity they have among themselves. And they also look alike,' I said with wonder.

'This is the spirit of Neo-Proletarianism. This is the identity of New China. All of us- the followers of the communist ideology are - so desirous to bring this identity into our country,' Ram Raj opened up the recess of his inner heart and put it bare before me.

'How the authorities are treating human beings as animals! How they are oppressing people for their nested interest and selfishness that I have known very well. All this must be put to an end in our country also. I do not know much of the theories and principles of communism. What I have understood about communism is "equality"- this is what I have heard about this and understood. This "equality" we also need here,'- Khaga Raj poured out his feelings and opinions.

I was listening. Ram Raj was repeating his thesis, 'The selfish and dictatorial society that has been built under the protection of the monopolistic capitalist class has to be uprooted and restructured and the course that the capitalist class has followed so far should be changed and start building a Neo-Proletarian system in the country. This is the need of the day. We are engaged in organizing the mass support in order to fulfil this very need. We feel we are nearing the goal! We are optimists!'

'Unselfish ambition is bound to meet with success!,' I gave my opinion.

'Selfishness which is collective and national may be called as "unselfishness",' he put forward his opinion carefully.

As soon as I said, 'Yes!' Khaga Raj cut in. He said, 'What the leaders do is always collective. Therefore, their actions should not be termed as selfish.'

I neither rejected nor supported the opinions of both of them. I just went on listening to their arguments, analyzing their facial expressions, but presenting myself as innocent as possible.

Ram Raj suddenly went into expressing his opinions on the system of the state. He said, 'The modern states where they have so-called people's democracy or socialism, and the capitalist class does not make its appearance outwardly here, however it is the capitalists who actually rule these states. The miserable and oppressed conditions of the masses have not changed. Their grievances have not been met. So what is needful here is a radical change.'

Khaga Raj, cutting in suddenly, said, 'When we would succeed in establishing the kind of society in our country too which is being built under the guidance of Mao's thoughts and which is so pleasant with heavenly joys, how happy everybody in our society could be!' He went further saying, more with his imagination than with experience, 'The Chinese cultural revolution has been successful in building new relationship among human beings - the new relationship that centers around the point of equality. This cultural revolution is the product of Mao's brain. However, we can also imitate it and welcome it into our country for the good of our nation!'

'You are right!,' Ram Raj said, supporting Khaga Raj's opinion.

Thinking that my silence meant I was also supporting Khaga Raj's opinion, he said, 'You and I know very well to what pitiable level the poverty of our village people is sinking. Today the reactionaries and dogmatists have their field-day in our society. So long as it isn't put to an end, to seek equality would be like making a castle in the air.'

'That's what I say!,' cutting in, Ram Raj said, 'The structure of today's society is the fundamental factor for the exploitation of the workers and peasants. Until the capitalist class monopoly cannot be brought to an end, until the proletarian revolution will not fully succeed, we will keep following the path of communist struggle. The blood flowing from the chest of the aristocracy is our good drink - we have to prove it!'

Ram Raj, addressing me with high enthusiasm, said, 'Every change of Government comes through the nozzle of the gun! Therefore, we do not get our rights for the begging. We have to take them by force! We communists should never forget this formula.'

Such enthusiastic and spirited statements of Ram Raj filled us both with the same kind of spirit and enthusiasm. We were both watching his fearless appearance. We could speak nothing to him and ask nothing. He further went on telling me about communism. I neither accepted his theories, nor rejected. I just acted the yes-man outwardly. We stayed in Ram Raj's for two hours, but we were not bored.

As it was getting late, we decided to take leave. We followed the road running through the bazaar and proceeded towards the camp.

'How did you like Ram Raj?', asked Khaga Raj on our way back to the camp.

In answer, I said, 'Ram Raj appears to be a real communist and he is a follower of Mao thoughts. I found good qualities of leadership in him. He can be a good leader. I am impressed by him!'

'Really?' Khaga Raj was happy to hear me say that, and said in response, 'I work under his leadership'.

'It's all right! Go on,' I said, respecting his faith in me. Khaga Raj went on telling me about Ram Raj and I went on listening to him until we arrived at the camp where Kailash Man along with other friends was waiting for us for lunch.

Soon the lunch was served. We had our lunch together. Kailash Man asked me about my morning sightseeing trip. I described him about how much I had enjoyed my sightseeing trip to the Damauli Bazaar and the company of his clerk, Khaga Raj who had kindly joined me on my trip. Kailash Man thanked Khaga Raj for joining me on my trip to Damauli Bazaar.

In a very pleasant atmosphere, we had our lunch, and after lunch we prepared ourselves for the trip to Pokhara. Kailash Man had arranged to take me by his Highway Project jeep to Pokhara. We left for Pokhara.

SRI JAGADGURU VISHWARADHYA
JNANA SIMHASAN JNANAMANDIR

LIBRARY

Jangamawadi Math. Varanasi
Acc. No.6387.....

Chapter 4

Every year trade fairs are held twice in Guangzhou of China. The purpose of the trade fairs is to display the indigenous products of China and to sell them to the local and foreign customers. In these fairs, most of the countries of the world particularly, the friendly countries of China and the customers from these countries, participate. At the beginning only the public level traders used to participate in these fairs. Now-a-days even the private traders have started to participate in these trade fairs.

This is the decade of the nineteen eighties. I also received invitation to participate in the trade fair to be held in Guangzhou. So I got visa for China. Among the traders going to participate in the trade fair was one Mr. Gagan Prasad, I decided to have his company on my travel to China. We together fixed the program for the tour.

I was very happy to go on the proposed tour of China. I had cherished a great wish to have a look at this closed country and now it was going to be fulfilled. So Gagan Prasad and me were busy preparing ourselves for it. After a few busy days we managed to have our passports, visas, tickets and foreign currency. According to our itinerary, we were to go to Hong Kong by plane on Kathmandu - Hong Kong flight. From Hong Kong we reached Guangzhou by train.

Those who had visited China previously had advised me on a number of 'does' and 'don't'. The more I listened to them, the more scared I used to grow. So I decided not to listen to them and face whatever came up on my own.

According to schedule we arrived at Hong Kong by air. As we had to board our train early in the morning we didn't go out in the evening.

As the train left at eight in the morning, we had to reach Kowloon station at seven sharp. We were at the station on time. Yes, the train started on the right time without making a second's delay. The train belonged to the Chinese government. I came to know, it was an express train that ran on the Hong Kong Guangzhou route. The train was very comfortable and beautiful. One could go from one end to the other. The seats were arranged in two and were comfortable. The train had a restaurant also.

After leaving Kowloon Station, the train ran through a -3-kilometer tunnel via Monkok, Kolung-ton and the cities of new territories of Hongkong and reached Lowoo. Lowoo is the last station of Hongkong. And this was the border of China. Beyond the border was the Shenzhen city.

I remembered, some years ago, I had watched that Shenzhen city through a binocular. Now I was looking at this city with my naked eyes without binocular from my train. I told Gagan about it and asked him to look at the city attentively. As it was a city area, the train slowed down its speed. We were busy watching the low and high rise buildings and the clean streets of the city.

Suddenly Gagan said, 'Oh! this city is more beautiful than Hongkong.'

Supporting him, I said, 'The atmosphere here is different from that of Hongkong. Moreover, this city is under construction. You should wait for sometime to compare this city to any other city'.

'Still under construction, you mean?' He was surprised.

'Yes, it is! Look! Everywhere the construction work is going on.' I said, pointing out towards the construction sites, 'This is the area which China has declared as a "free economic zone".'

It took about fifteen minutes to cross the city area. Now we passed into the countryside. The villages did not look like villages but mini-cities surrounded by lush green crop, vegetable and fruits fields. We also saw farmers working in the green fields. Gagan asked me questions which I tried to answer as far as possible with my knowledge, but more so with my guess and imagination. He had heard about development of China. But now as he saw with his own eyes he was curious and excited to know more about China and the development they had achieved here.

There were no passengers in the train wearing appearance that matched ours. And we did not see passengers looking at each others. Everybody was busy within himself and appeared, at least outwardly, contented.

Once in a while, young Chinese girls appeared pushing their trollies of goods for sale. But the goods on sale did not appear fit to our need and taste. They also sold food stuffs.

After about 3 hours, we arrived at Guangzhou. Getting off the train, we went to the immigration and the customs. With formalities completed, we got out of the station. There were dozens of hotel representatives lined up with small stalls as their booking offices outside the station. They represented hotels with one star to five stars. We decided to stay at a hotel named Dong-fong which was located near the Trade Fair.

The room charge of the hotel for a single bedroom was US \$200 which we thought expensive for us, but we had no alternative. Moreover, the charges of most hotels were about the same. So, we were compelled to book the hotel.

When we checked in the hotel, we put our luggage at the counter and took a look around the place. We came to know that the hotel was rather mini-city. There were all kinds of necessary governmental contact offices, representative offices of commercial corporations, markets where one could buy almost everything. There were banks and a post office, telecommunication facilities, ten restaurants catering all kinds of foods and drinks, places of entertainments, covered halls for games and sports and swimming pools. And there were gardens, giving the glimpses and the impressions of the Chinese culture all finely set and organized.

We went into our room, with our luggage and went to a hall of the hotel where the names of the participants of the Trade Fair were registered. There were Chinese girls and boys who spoke different languages and were busy behind their desks. We proceeded to a table with a sign of 'English Language' and took our place in the queue.

We registered our names and got the entry-pass for the Trade Fair. According to the suggestion of my colleague, we hired an interpreter for two days. We also paid the fee of the interpreter in another room and arranged for a visit to the fair after 03 p.m. the same day.

'Hello! I am your interpreter,' one young girl came up and announced in English, stretching out her hand for hand-shake. We were then in the hotel lobby, wondering how to find our interpreter.

'Oh! you are our interpreter? Glad to meet you!', I said and told her that we should move towards the Fair right away as we had to start our work as soon as possible. She was ready and we started for the Fair.

The site of the Trade Fair was not far. So, we took an easy and talking reached the Fair site. But they didn't allow the interpreter into the Fair. Informing us that she would be back at six in the evening to take us back she left. We entered the Fair Hall.

There were twelve halls of the Fair. Every hall was a four storied building. The rooms in the halls made quite a maze difficult to trace and find.

It took us sometime to find the ways and places in the Fair Halls. As the Fair was for the indigenous exportable products of China, it was but natural to find crowds milling around in the Fair Halls.

It is difficult to find English speaking Chinese people. Although you find someone, there is another difficulty, it is to make yourself understood and to understand the speaker - that is, the difficulty arising out of pronunciation. To avoid this problem, my colleague Gagan had arranged an interpreter. He said, 'We have paid two hundred F.E.C. for two days. But we are now deprived of the interpreter's service. What is this?'

'Yes, we are in a real problem. Everybody is busy in their own work. Whom to ask? And who has time to answer our questions here? Nobody has really! so we are in a fix!'

'Well! It is a new place for us.' I tried to console him. We had not yet been able to make out the map of the Fair. We, however, decided to go around the Fair aimlessly. We just moved along.

Gagan said with somewhat uneasiness, 'Where should we go first? Let's decide it.'

'Let's take just a cursory look around today. Tomorrow we will do our business, O.K.?' I said, pacifying him.

'What do you say! We have just two days with us, today and tomorrow. What's the use of wasting our time?' he was expressing his worry! He being a good business man it was natural that he was in a hurry.

'Look! How beautiful is that fan! Really Chinese goods are nice! What do you think?' Pointing towards the display stall, I wanted to know his opinion.

'Look here! This telephone set and that television!' He too was fascinated. We began to make our own individual discoveries in the Fair.

I found I had gone a little too far looking at the goods on display, leaving Gagan behind. At times we met again as we went on our own ways, being attracted by the goods of our respective choices. In the process we happened to be in a square where there were on display motor vehicles, motor cycles, tractors, power tillers and heavy equipments for construction purposes.

We peered into the automobile machines placed on display in the open square. Gagan liked the power tiller and said, 'For our country this little tractor is practically useful.'

'You are right!' I said, supporting him.

Gagan wanted to go to the stall and ask for the price. I told him to meet me at the same stall and moved away. I went on looking at new stalls of

different goods but I couldn't return to the place where I had told Gagan for our meeting again. I lost my way. Later I somehow reached the stall where I had left Gagan. But I found him gone. I didn't know which way he went. I looked at the map. There were five gates to exit. We had entered through No.1 Gate. So I decided to proceed towards No.1 gate. It was six p.m. now. The Fair was now closing. I followed the crowd which was moving ahead and found myself out of the Fair ground in a moment but it was Gate No.3. I turned back and got out through the No. 1 Gate. When I was out through the gate, I saw Gagan and the interpreter together. We three - Gagan, myself and the interpreter returned to the Hotel. We sat in the Hotel lobby and fixed our program for the next day. Then we retired into our rooms.

'We have to take our dinner before 8 p.m.' said Gagan coming into my room after reading the rules of the hotel. He went on, 'You can eat your breakfast in 3 restaurants from 7 to 9 a.m. And you can eat your lunch in 4 restaurants from 12 to 2 p.m. understand? Now do not waste your time!'

'All right! Now we will move faster!'

'What's the rate of the US dollar?' Gagan wanted to know the difference in the rate of the US dollar and the local currency.

'Three hundred fifty F.E.C for hundred US.' I said about the exchange rate of the morning

'F.E.C. is Foreign Exchange Certificate. How can it be the local currency?'

'No. I don't mean that. The local currency is "Remibi", but the money is called "Yuan".'

'Why are there two currencies?'

'This is the Chinese policy. That's all about it.'

We went out for our lunch. When we got out into a garden, we realized that it was evening already. In the night time, the sounds of the water fountains mixed with different colored lights were creating unusually sweet music on the one hand, and on the other, the different lights were creating an unusually beautiful colored atmosphere. Each and every corner of the garden appeared to be as if competing with one another for their beauty. And we were just hanging around them spell-bound!

'Oh! It's like Paradise!' Suddenly Gagan blared out.

'Oh! Really it is beautiful!' I said, supporting him.

'How much time, how much labor and how much expenditure must have taken for building this garden!' said Gagan with his business calculation.

'Praiseworthy is the brain that built it! Isn't it?' Talking, enjoying and appreciating the beauty of the garden, we were strolling in the garden for hours. Lastly we thought of going into a nearby restaurant. We faced language problem there. After waiting for a pretty long time, an English speaking man arrived and the dinner of our choice was ordered. We were not enjoying our food. We were eating because we had to as we had ordered the food. Gagan said out of frustration, 'That's why I say we need interpreter. Tomorrow we will eat with our interpreter. Don't forget!'

After our dinner, we retired into our rooms and took rest.

Next morning we went to a restaurant to take our breakfast on time, and prepared ourselves for going to the Fair. We then went to the hotel lobby and waited for the interpreter for whom we had paid the fee already.

'Yesterday we had difficult time because of the language problem. If you were with us, it would have been so nice!' Gagan said addressing the interpreter.

'If you had told me, I would have stayed with you until 6.30 or 07 p.m. What happened? So you had difficulty?' said the interpreter with her curiosity to know the matter.

Gagan told her in detail. Food was ordered, but we couldn't eat it. He said he was hungry that night and couldn't sleep. I also told her about the language problem that we had to face. She assured us repeatedly that she would be helping us as far as possible with as much time as she could spare from now onward. We were talking in a formal manner.

As we were in hurry to visit the Fair, we three immediately left for the Fair site. We went on talking to each other on the way. Gagan told the interpreter that our trip to China was the first and it had not been as satisfactory as we had expected it to be.

'Why are you entertaining your doubt?' said the interpreter.

'No. It is not my doubt. It is my problem! You try to understand me. I am a tourist. I am a visitor. I am also your guest. I mean, I am your country's guest. I need your help every moment, every minute. Otherwise I can do nothing. Do you now understand?' Gagan explained to the girl about the misery he had to suffer yesterday.

'I understand your problems when you are on such visits! That's why we are here to help you!' She said in a very sweet manner.

Such formal exchanges might sound sweet. But in practical life they make little sense! Our problem was with ourselves. And we also could not understand the helplessness of the interpreter. If we wanted, she could accompany us the whole day. But if we kept ourselves busy all day, what was the use

of keeping her? Gagan knew it, but he failed to be clear about it and act accordingly. So I said, cutting in, 'I think we should let her go now. We will meet at twelve O'clock, and we will have our lunch together, O.K.?'

Both Gagan and the interpreter accepted my proposition. In the mean time we arrived at Gate No.1. We parted our ways with the mutual reminding of meeting at twelve O'clock.

It being the morning time, at every cabin businessmen were holding negotiations. Tea serving girls were busy pouring tea. All were busy in their respective ways. We too were busy. We were also in hurry. We had to see many things yet. Our work was still incomplete.

We had just taken a cursory look at the stalls in a hall. Passing through a hall, we discussed to make our work more systematic and practical. We decided to work in our individual way. meet at twelve O'clock at No.1 Gate. With this decision we went our own ways. Gagan moved on. I remained at the same stall looking for the goods of my choice.

Chinese goods are, whether modern or traditional, of good quality. Therefore, these can have good demands in the world market indeed. I came to this conclusion after my observation of the automobile machinery produced by the mixture of both the old and the new methods and techniques.

I could not place very big order at this time in my business deals. I, however, placed order for two small items. Time was taking on its wings. I finished my business deal hurriedly and proceeded towards Gate No. 1. and waited for Gagan and the interpreter.

After a while our interpreter arrived. She said, 'Yesterday, you were behind, your friend was ahead. Today you are ahead and your friend has not come yet.'

I said smiling, 'This is life. How do you take it yourself?'

'What do you mean?' She was confused by my statement.

I realized. She was young on the one hand, and on the other there was language difficulty. It was natural for her to find it difficult to understand me. Then I said, 'No! Nothing! I was just kidding. Don't worry!' Whether she understood or not, she said, 'O.K.!' In the mean time Gagan presented himself. Three of us proceeded together towards the hotel.

It was lunch time. We went to a restaurant. Now we didn't have to order for our lunch ourselves. The interpreter would do it as we told her.

I asked our interpreter's name gently, 'By the way, may I know your name? We forgot to ask your name.'

'Oh! My name is Chang-Sach. If you find it difficult, you can call me "Charley".

I thought it better to call her Chinese name rather than the English name. So addressing her with her Chinese name, I said, 'Chang -Sach! May I know where you live?'

'My parents live far away from here. But now I live here in this city,' she said.

'Your parents are not here and you live alone?' Gagan said, trying to know more about her.

'Yes! I work as an interpreter at the hotel. And I live alone in the city.'

'You live alone! Eat alone at this age?' Gagan said surprisingly.

'This is China. There is everyone alone here. You can't get your job wherever you say. For job you have to leave even your home town or village,' She said, undoing the knots of her personal life and problems.

'If you don't mind, may I ask you a question?' Gagan said gently.

'O.K. Go ahead!' said Chang-Sach.

'How much do you earn as an interpreter? May I know?' Gagan said hesitatingly, because he himself had paid her about hundred yuans per day.

'I earn enough for myself,' said Chang -Sach in a formal way.

We did not ask her any more questions. Lunch came to the table. It was good. We had already told Chang-Sach about the kind of food we liked. And she ordered accordingly. The food was now good. We ate to our heart's content.

Chang-Sach, relishing her food, said, 'How do you like the food? It is O.K. now?'

'It is very good now,' both of us said at once. She laughed at the manner we said and we joined her laughing ourselves. Good food and laughter were enjoyable. So Chang-Sach, drawing herself closer towards us asked, 'May I know what are your names and where do you come from?'

We handed her our cards and explained her the addresses on the cards. She also, giving her card said, 'If you call this phone number, you will find me.'

Now we found the formality between Chang-Sach and ourselves had disappeared. We now begun to talk more freely. We were joking with her now. She realized this herself too. So her behavior became more intimate and closer towards us. By the time we finished our lunch, we were feeling as intimate

friends without any formality and distance. Getting out of the restaurant we were ready for the Fair.

Today we decided to visit the light industry section. This section was in the hall No.8 which was spread over all the four stories. And we found it very crowded indeed. It was said to be light industry section, but we found it to be only in name. There was such a variety of products that it could take 3/4 days to see them closely in this section only, we guessed. So we decided as before to do our business in our individual way.

I didn't know I had passed hours in one single room. Items were very good. There were many items. It naturally took a lot of time to select items and ask the price. So naturally I was roaming in the same room for hours.

Among the Chinese goods the light industry products were capturing the world market. Because of the competition the quality of the products was good. Most of the products appeared to be meeting the international standard. Looking at the products one could have the idea about the industrial development in China.

China is rich in natural resources. So most of her industries are fed by the indigenous raw materials. It is only rarely that raw materials are imported from other countries. Things seen in this light made one believe that China in her economic development was bound to hit the peak within a few years' time. This was my conclusion.

I was moving forward looking at products. I found myself in the room where they had handicrafts. There was a crowd in this room too - the crowd of customers. But the customers in majority were the Americans and the Europeans. I came to know, the products of the Chinese handicrafts have good markets in Europe and America. Those beautiful articles made by the Chinese hands were attracting everybody. I was moving around looking at the stalls from one room to another and being attracted by the beauty of the items on display.

When I came out from the hall, I found Gagan and Chang-Sach standing at the gate, waiting for me. I said, addressing Chang, 'Excuse me! I am late!' and I said, addressing Gagan, 'How long are you standing here?'

'It's all right! Your friend also has just come out,' Chang said.

Now three of us started for the hotel. While we were moving, Gagan said, 'Did you finish your business?'

'I should say I have finished. As for seeing the Fair, I think, it will take more than a week.

We got into the compound of the hotel. We came across a Chinese young man who stopped to talk to Chang-Sach. We also stopped. Looking towards us Chang-Sach said, 'Nipuor!'

'Nifai!' said the young man.

When I heard them talking I guessed Chang-Sach was telling the young man about us. The Chinese young man asked who we were and Chang-Sach said, 'They are from Nepal.'

After the Chinese young man left, Gagan said, 'Were they talking about us?'

'Yes! I think so,' I said, 'But they come from different communities, I guess.'

'How the Chinese people can be different?' Gagan expressed his curiosity.

'You don't know? There are ten different communities, speaking ten different languages in one province here. And their cultural and religious traditions are also different,' I said trying to explain Gagan the point. Then turning to Chang-Sach I said, 'Does the young man you were talking to come from different region speaking a different dialogue?'

'Yes! He speaks "Quang-tang-hwa" and comes from this region. Their pronunciation is different from ours. I speak "Futung-hwa". I used the word 'Nipuor' for you. Anyone who speaks "Quang-tang-hwa" will use the term "Nifai".' She explained to us the difference and complexity of Chinese semantics.

'I thought the Chinese to be just one community speaking one language,' Gagan said as if he knew this fact only now.

We were now in the large lobby of the Hotel Dong-fong.

I asked Gagan to put our briefcases in our hotel rooms. Gagan then proceeded towards the rooms. Chang-Sach and myself moved towards the sofa in one of the corners of the hotel lobby.

I asked Chang-Sach to tell me about the Guangzhou city. In the process of her description she said, 'Before the liberation, there were many English people living here. So this city is much influenced by the English. Its name "Canton" also comes from them,' she further said, 'Now there are no foreigners here. Only Chinese live here. Many old places and things have disappeared and are replaced by the new. This city expanding and developing very fast going to be a main attraction in China!'

'What was the attraction that drew you to this city?' I put a simple but complex question to her.

She couldn't say anything immediately. She just lowered her head and was in a contemplative mood on the question. I also kept quiet waiting for

her answer. Slowly raising her head, she said, hesitatingly, 'Well! What attraction should I tell you about?'

'There must be something,' I said pushing her further on my question.

She felt uneasy at the question, that I could see clearly on her face. She didn't want to say anything on the point I raised. This I understood very well. She was growing quite sentimental.

Breaking the silence I said in an undertone, 'Never mind. I am not pressing you to reply my question.'

'No! it doesn't make any difference whether I tell you anything or not, although I am supposed to tell everything foreigners want to know from me.'

'It's all right! Don't tell. It is not absolutely necessary that you tell. I am not forcing you!' I repeated.

'I thought I would get high salary. So I came to this city to work. But it is useless!' Chang blurted out unknowingly.

No sooner had she said this than my curiosity heightened, 'What do you mean by useless?'

I knew it was a difficult question for her to answer. However, she slowly began to unfold her mind. She said, 'With the hope that I could get higher salary, I left my "home town" and came here. But I didn't get what I had expected,' she went on, 'They also exploit us here as they do back at my home province. Now I must work for one year. I need money to go home. What to do!'

She stopped while she was telling her story, took a long sigh, looked around with suspicion, trying to hide her statements. She ran her eyes from one end of the lobby to the other. In the process, I could see her eyes turning to be watery! I said nothing. I just kept looking around. She got up and went into the toilet.

I felt sorry for her. I was also regretting for my question! Then I began to reflect, 'Human beings cannot be bound up by rules, regulations and ideology, nor can be machines. They ultimately return to their own nature, as they cannot hide themselves from other fellow human beings, whether they be natives or aliens.'

After a while Chang returned with an artificial smile on her lips. Taking her seat on the sofa, she said, 'Excuse me!' She went on, 'To go to my home town it takes 4 days and nights by train.'

'You came here over such a long distance for work? How many are you in your family?'

'My father, mother and a younger brother. My father and mother work in factories and my brother is at school.'

'Did you finish your study?'

'I have a degree in foreign trade, and besides that I have passed the course "Tafel" in English. Now I think I am done with my study, she further said, 'I though want to continue my further study, I am forced to give up. My parents are not rich people. So I have no opportunity for higher education. If I could make money, I could help my brother for his higher education,' Chang said without hesitation.

'Do you have to pay money for your education even here?' I said as I had no idea that communist China charged money to its citizens for education.

'Primary education is free. After that the provincial government makes rules and regulations for managing the education system in every province. For higher education you have to pay fees. But some people with source and force can get higher education on government expense not only in the country but also abroad.' She was no opening up.

'Excuse me! May I ask what is your age?' I said though I was feeling uneasy at the question.

'I am twenty-two', she said without any hesitation and uneasiness.

'Marriage?'

'It is still too far away! First of all I have to help my brother stand on his feet. My parents gave me education by going through misery themselves. It is they who maintained the home and saved money with difficulty for my education. They have never gone out of their own city. They have said, "Daughter! When you will be able to earn, we will go to visit another city of China every year." But their dream is not going to be realized'. I haven't saved money so far,' she continued, 'Moreover, I have my brother's education before me.' With a long sigh she stopped.

'How far is your home-town?' I said, diverting her from near bursting sentiments.

'We live in the city of Chang -Chun which is in the province of Zilin. Before that I am told, our home was in a small village near the town of Dwan -hua,' She went on, 'Now, my parents are provided with a living quarter where they are working. They are living in the city of Chang -Chun. 'It is a big city, quite a nice place!' She looked quite enthusiastic and cheerful while she was talking about her parents and the place where they lived which was but natural.

'Is not the city of Chang -Chun further north of Beijing?', I said, trying to make myself certain.

'Yes! It is one thousand kilometers farther from Beijing.'

'You have come over such a long distance. You really deserve good salary and other facilities for your work. Don't you?' I again put the kind of question which she didn't want to answer.

'Well! I think I deserve, and I have been given too. But....!' she was quiet.

Gagan appeared and took his seat on the nearby sofa. He talked about the incident that had taken place. While he was going to the hotel room with briefcases in his hands, a porter came up and took the briefcases from him. Taking the briefcases to the room the porter demanded money. The porter was the same man who on the previous day had refused taking tips from Gagan himself. But today he didn't go away until Gagan gave him two Yuans. Mentioning about this incident to Chang I said, 'Yesterday the same man refused to take tips when my friend wanted to give him two Yuans. Today he asked two Yuans himself. Why is it so?'

'It is not only in this hotel but in all the hotels in China accepting tips is prohibited. If anybody takes tips, he is taken to have gone against the law and action is taken against him. There must have been some Chinese around him yesterday,' Chang-Sach said.

'Yes! Yesterday the Floor-in-Charge was there,' said Gagan.

'Poor man! Why can't he take a few Yuans for his service? Why is it a crime here?' I said, posing another question to Chang.

'Do not say so! The law of the state must be binding to every citizen. To beg or ask money from anyone is to show one's weakness and to live under anyone's kindness or consideration is to live like an animal. To live like human beings everybody must maintain the human discipline which the state orders.' Chang-Sach said defending the state in a very serious manner.

'How much these porter get as their salary who cannot take any tips?' Gagan said cutting in.

'They get fifty Yuans per month. It is enough for them. One can live fairly on thirty Yuans?' In the process of the conversation Chang-Sach made a slip and her secret was betrayed. She must have realized her mistake and regretted over it later. Now she had no mood to say anything, even to talk.

'Total fifty Yuans for one month?' said Gagan, expressing his surprise, 'It means a man gets only fourteen dollars for the work of one month?' Gagan said, addressing Chang-Sach. But Chang did not look like she would answer the question.

Gagan, using his businessman's brain, did the complicated arithmetic and presented before us - both Chang and myself. We were not in a position to answer or counter his view. We were just keeping quiet.

In the lobby there was a desk. And on the desk there was a plate with the writing 'Assistant Manager'. Behind the desk was a smart young man. He was busy dealing with the guests who were in blue suits and red ties.

Gagan pointing out towards the young man said, 'How much that smart young man gets?'

'About seventy Yuans per month,' Chang said.

'So you get less than that?' I said.

'No. I get the same,' Chang said without reservation.

'That means, you earn twenty dollars per month.' Gagan calculated immediately.

'Degree holders cannot get more than this here. But in our province it is even less. Only about fifty Yuans.' She said with satisfaction.

The barriers that existed between us and Chang-Sach were breaking down. We were getting closer and closer to each other. She was unfolding herself to us. The state also decided what the natives could tell the foreigners and what they could not. According to the decision and policy of the state the citizens had to behave. I came to know this fact only after Chang-Sach told us about it.

Chang-Sach appeared to be regretting for telling such things. Trying to cover up her mistake, Chang said, 'I should not have told you such things! I, however, could not avoid your wish. So I told you'. So you mean, you have to work for three months to get what you earn in two days?' Gagan said in a surprised tone.

Gagan's surprise was natural. For Gagan had paid two hundred Yuans for Chang-Sach to the hotel management. But she got only 3 per cent of the amount. Such difference could be digested by none. So Gagan said expressing his opinion, 'If this is so here, then I should say, exploitation has gone beyond the limit here.' He went on, 'How can it be that the proletariat is exploited by the state which is run by the proletariat dictatorship?'

'No. We cannot call it exploitation,' I said, giving my opinion.

'When Karl Marx found that the mill-owner paid to the worker much less than he earned, he defined it as exploitation. And he launched a movement against such exploitation. But later in the course of time, the ideologies supposed to liberate the proletariat, turned against the proletariat and exploited them once they were at the seat of the state power. Exploitation was an evil,

whether it was practised by the individual or by an organization or by the state. And mankind must be liberated from exploitation. This is my opinion,' said Gagan, clarifying his point of view.

As we were talking in our own language, Chang-Sach was just staring at us both. And as we were expressing our opinion in our talk, we did not feel it necessary to tell Chang-Sach what we were talking about. So we went on talking in our own way.

It was now time for dinner, we had to decide where to eat - in the restaurant within the hotel or outside the hotel. We had to know what Chang had to say. She said it was better to eat in the restaurant within the hotel. So we decided to eat in the hotel restaurant.

We had some time before we went to take our dinner. So Gagan proposed for a walk outside the hotel. As I didn't want to go out, I said I would rather stay in the hotel, talking to Chang -Sach.

Gagan asked Chang about the places and ways he should follow. She explained to him about all. And she said, 'Don't go very far. Foreigners should not move around alone!' She warned.

'All right! I will not go far away, just outside the hotel,' said Gagan and went out.

'What do you mean? Can't foreigners walk around alone?' I said, demanding Chang to explain it.

'Yes! such is the rule here. That's why every hotel is turned into a mini - city with all the facilities within the hotel compound, so that the foreigners don't have to go out for anything.'

'Yes! I have now realized it with my own experience.'

'Even if you go out, where can you go? Foreigners cannot stay at small lodges and enter restaurants nor can they stay at the homes of any Chinese or take residence at any Chinese home. No Chinese can bring any foreigner as his guest to his house or let him stay in his house. So where do you go?'

'There is no market place here to stroll around?'

'There is. But it is just for the Chinese people,' Chang said, answering my strange question. She went on, 'There are about 3/4 friendship stores. These friendship stores are the markets for the foreigners. If you want to go to these stores, you should take a guide like me.'

I was getting more and more information about China from Chang -Sach. According to Chang excepting the persons entitled for the purpose, no Chinese could come into contact with foreigners or even talk to them. If any Chinese did such things, he was liable to legal action. Any guide who came

into contact with foreigners, he or she had to prepare report as which places the foreigner visited, what he ate, what he talked, what was his ideology, what was his interest, how much he spent, etc.

When I heard Chang-Sach say about such rigid policy regarding the foreigners I was scared in my heart. I slowly said to Chang -Sach,- 'Then you are preparing report about us too?'

'Well! If I found you doing wrong things, then I have to...!' She said jokingly.

'Is it possible to watch every foreigner?' I said expressing my curiosity. 'Well! The policy is good! But how far will it be successful is a matter of investigation. If the Chinese people could go on maintaining the sort of unfriendly attitude towards the foreigners, then it will be successful. But if it is the opposite, if human beings become one, then the Chinese government will fail in its policy.'

'Ultimately, human beings are the same. No matter where they live in this world human nature is the same. Need of shelter in rain and heat, food for the hungry stomach, tears in sorrow, laughter in happiness, such qualities of human nature nobody can change.'

'But the Neo-Proletarianism of China is trying to change!'

'All right! It may be an effort on experiment. But it won't succeed!'

Gagan dropped in and our discussion stopped. After taking his seat on the sofa, Gagan said, 'When I went out at the gate they were shouting "money-change, money change." I talked to them. One money changing boy took me to the road-side and gave me six hundred Yüans for one hundred US dollars. The boy wanted to change more. But I changed only one hundred and came back.' Gagan explained in detail.

I told Chang-Sach about it. She said in somewhat terrified tone, 'This is not good! Had the police found, they would have arrested you and the boy both and legal action would have been taken! Out in the black market you naturally get more.'

'Do you have black markets here?'- I said, trying to know more on this new information.

'The difference in the rate between the bank and the black market is 72 per cent.' Gagan said with his business man's calculation, 'Such big difference is nothing but the sign of the falling economic condition here!'

'That's right!'- Chang-Sach said, agreeing with Gagan's opinion.

'It means, a worker gets only eight dollars per month as his salary, doesn't he?' Gagan said, addressing me.

Now it was time for dinner. As we had decided to take our dinner at the orchard restaurant of the hotel, we now proceeded towards the restaurant. It was getting late in the evening. The tables of the restaurant were getting occupied. We also went and occupied one of the tables.

As we had already decided on what to eat for our dinner at our lunch time, we didn't feel it necessary to check the menu ourselves. So we left it up to Chang. She ordered six different dishes.

The place was well lit up, well - managed and everything was nicely set with the traditional Chinese decoration and style. No matter where you looked, your eyes got fixed there! The beautify of the restaurant was such that you did not want to move away. The boys and girls working in the restaurant also were extremely good looking and smart. Boys and girls in the same kind of light -fitting dress appeared very busy in their respective works. Their average age was not more than twenty or twenty two.

Observing the boys and girls working in the restaurant, Gagan said, addressing Chang, 'Tell me, how many hours do these boys and girls work in such a smart way and how much they get as payment?'

'They work six days a week and eight hours a day. And the payment they get is fifty to sixty Yuans per month,' Chang -Sach said now without any hesitation.

The girls were all alike in their physique, height and appearance as their age at which I asked Chang -Sach, 'How is it that these girls look alike as if they were cast in the same mould? How could they manage this?'

Chang-Sach said, 'They select people just suitable for the place and the job. When one applies for the job like this one has to mention one's age height, weight, complexion and so on. And the management selects only those candidates who can meet these qualifications. A large number of people here want jobs in the hotels. If there are ten vacancies hundred people apply for the jobs. The competition is very tough!'

'I guess, the people working here are more from outside than from this province, right?' I said.

'Definitely right! They look like coming from the north,' She said with a wild guess.

'Maybe, they do not work here for long,' I said.

'Sure! Maximum for two years. If they are able to maintain their physical fitness and remain unmarried, they might be working for seven to eight years, but overage people are not supposed to be fit to work in the restaurants,' - She said, perhaps with her own experience.

'Then, what do these beautiful girls do later on?' I said,- trying to draw information from Chang on the life-style of the Chinese people.

'What they do?' she said, 'They get married at about the age of twenty-five. If they are in the cities, they start working in the factories. If they live in the villages, they work in the fields. Anyway, we have to live!' Chang-Sach put it enthusiastically.

Dinner arrived. The food was now spread over the table. We three started eating in our own style. Chang-Sach ate with chopsticks, we with fork and spoon. I realized the food was not of the Guang Don province but of the North. The taste was like that of the Nepalese food. We ate slowly not because we liked it much, but because we had to eat it.

Both of us, Gagan and me, were not attracted by the food. But certainly we were attracted by the beauty of the atmosphere around. Chang, however, ate with great relish. She talked about the food while she was eating. We also told her out of formality that the food was good.

Appreciating Chang's company, Gagan said, 'If you had not been with us, we would neither be able to know about China and the Chinese people nor could we have good food to eat.'

In response to Gagan's appreciative words, Chan-Sach only smiled. Gagan changed the topic of conversation to the English language and the rules of English pronunciation. Chang answered every question put up by Gagan. 'How long have you been speaking English?' said Gagan.

'I began to speak English when I was four years old. I started it with the "Long live" of Chairman Mao!' She said, 'But I did not know its meaning until I was fifteen years old.'

'The words that you pronounced for ten years, you did so without knowing the meaning?' I said in reaction.

'Yes! I did so. We do not say things here with full knowledge of what we are saying. What you have to say you say even without knowledge. Though you know, it is not beneficial for you. What you have to say, say it. That's all!' Chang said, turning serious.

We had not finished our conversation yet. But the plates were now empty. So we were about to leave our table. According to our schedule we had to check out from the hotel at 09.00 a.m. and catch our train at 10.00 a.m. Our desire to see China had only been partially fulfilled and our inquisitiveness on China is growing more and more.

I told Chang-Sach about our program. As we did not have time to see the Guangzhou city, I told Chang about our intention to come back and see

what we had missed in this visit. I also discussed with Chang-Sach about the hotel that we should stay on our next visit.

Chang said, 'You can stay at other hotels also. The charges are almost the same. When there is no trade fare like this, hotels are cheaper. You do as you like. This hotel also is not bad, I think,' She said.

'No! This hotel is very good! What we want is new experience. So we want to know about other hotels also. Nothing else!' Gagan said,- feeling somewhat uneasy.

'If we stayed at another hotel, can you come to us as our interpreter?' - I asked Chang.

'No, I can't come, sorry! I am employed at this hotel.'

'Can't you come in the morning or evening too?'

'No. Sorry! If the hotel management comes to know that I am working without their permission I am liable to punishment and I can be fired from the job.'

'It means, you are a kind of slave in this hotel for twenty-four hours!'

'Whatever you think, it is up to you. You can think of it as a job-responsibility, or discipline or slavery. But wherever I work, I must maintain and obey the rules of the place,' said Chang expressing her idea on job ethics.

'With an exchange of promises to see again, we got out of the restaurant. It was now late night, so we said good night as well as bye-bye to Chang -Sach.

'Good- night! Bye - Bye! See you again!' said Chang-Sach also.

We had no other option now then going into our room and relax.

It was still early in the morning when we hurriedly reached the station and finished our business through immigration and customs. The train was ready at the station. It took some time to find our boggy and seat numbers.

The train started on right time leaving the Guangzhou station behind. I looked out on the high and low buildings of the city and found myself lost in the pleasant atmosphere of the city. Likewise, Gagan also appeared to be lost in the atmosphere mixed with the musical sound of the train and the pleasant atmosphere outside. However, we had our own ways of looking, thinking and feeling. We were not in any mood of talking to each other.

The city of Guangzhou was gradually being left behind. Now the small village houses started appearing on the scene. I had a strong desire to study the stories being enacted inside those houses. And I would also like to know the inner pain of those green fields. Rolling in the easy world of sweet

imaginations and dreams I and my train both sped ahead to embrace the horizon
across the China border.

Chapter 5

After four months I had to make a plan for our second visit to China. The purpose of our visit this time was to be to inspect and dispatch the goods soon that we had ordered at the Trade Fair held in Guangzhou . This time our trip to China would be long. We would go to Fuzian city in the province of Fu -Chau via the city of Guangzhou and remain there for two days. From here we would proceed to Nan - Chang another city in the province of Zianglesie, where we would stay for one day. Then we would go to Shanghai, the main city of China, where we made a program of staying for one week. This time our tour in China would be of more than twenty days. Gagan and myself together made this program. As we have been to China already, it was no problem for us to pay another visit to this country.

As we could not get our visas from the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu, we decided to get tourist visas in Hong Kong. With this decision we left Kathmandu for Hong Kong. On the next day of our arrival in Hong Kong, we applied to the China Travel service Agency for tourist visa. They asked us a few questions and told us to come next day at 5 p.m. for getting the result whether we would get the visa or not. We had to stay for two days in Hong Kong just for waiting to get the visa.

Fortunately, we were given to know that we would get the visa when we arrived at the office of China Travel Service Agency. Eighty per cent of the applicants, who had applied along with us, did not get the visa. And we were among the lucky twenty per cent. When we were given to know this our happiness knew no bound. Now we were in hurry to gather more information on our travel to China.

If we did all the reservation business, including hotel and the air ticket, with the China Travel Service Agency it would be better for us, and no botheration. We were advised to that effect by the staff of the Agency. So, according to their advice, we arranged our flight reservation to Guangzhou, Fu-Chau, Nan-Chang and Shanghai and our hotel rooms in those cities with the China Travel Service Agency. We paid all the charges for the reservations in US dollars. Now we didn't have to worry about our travel up to Shanghai.

We decided to leave for Guangzhou by train next day and stay at Dong-Fong hotel for one day. We also decided that we would see the Guangzhou city very well and go on sightseeing trips around it this time. And we also decided to have Chang-Sach as our interpreter this time also.

When we told people that we were going to visit China, we felt very happy. People, to whom we talked about our tour to China, naturally got excited and said, 'Oh! are you going to visit China? How are you going there? On government invitation? Or for participation in seminars? Or for medical treatment?'

And we had to reply them to satisfy their curiosity. And such questions were asked by people of various nationalities such as Nepalese, Indians, Pakistanis, Afghans, British, and even some Chinese - all sorts of people and had to satisfy their curiosities telling them about our China tour.

People have a great inquisitiveness to know about 'things' which are hidden. This is human nature. Even most of those residing in Hong Kong know nothing about China. Those who know about the old China, know nothing about the new China in a clear way. And they who have seen the new China, know nothing about the old China. With such curiosity people want to visit China and find themselves delving into the pages of history.

According to our fixed program we arrived at Guangzhou. As we had already stayed at Hotel Dong-Fong, we found it easy and comfortable this time. We were checked in at the reception. We were in need of interpreter. So we asked at the reception for an interpreter. We were told that Chang-Sach, our interpreter last time, had already been booked. So we were given another interpreter.

We went to our rooms, put our luggage there and came back to the lobby. Our interpreter came and said, 'Hello! My name is Lily! I am your interpreter.'

Very smart! Tall and beautiful like a queen with a symmetric physique! Smiling face with fair complexion! Age, one can guess to be about twenty years old. Attracted by the beauty of our interpreter, Gagan said, 'China seems to be a land of beauties, doesn't it!'

I did not pay attention to what Gagan said with his aesthetic sense of Chinese beauty and moved forward to shake hands with the interpreter. For formality with a handshake I said, 'May I know your Chinese name please?'

'It will be difficult for you. As you may forget it, Lily is all right. Isn't it?' She said smiling.

'I wanted to know your Chinese name, anyway!' I insisted.

'Well if you want to, my real name is Liang - Lie! It is very difficult for the foreigners. And more, there is not much difference between Lily and Liang -Lie. So, when foreigners ask my name, I tell them my name as Lily. So Lily will be easier for you also. Don't you think so?' She said explaining more about her name.

'Well! I should say, you are right! But for me your Chinese name will be easier than your English name. And I like your Chinese name!'

'Yes! You are the first foreigner to say so!'

Gagan said, interrupting our conversation, 'Today we are free for the whole day. Tomorrow we have to go to Fu -Chau. So why not we make a program to see Guangzhou today?'

Gagan's proposition was right. So we moved to the sofa in one to the corner of the lobby to chalk out the program. And we asked Liang -Lie to give us a short introduction of Guangzhou.

This city is called 'Flower city', we were told. Guangzhou, which is the biggest and the most beautiful of all the cities of south China, is sprawled over about a thousand square miles. From political, economical and cultural points of views, Guangzhou is taken to be the most important city- center of China. And the climate of the city is almost alike throughout the whole year. Because of this climatical reason also, the city was taken to be so important, we were told by our interpreter, Liang - Lie.

When Gagan wanted to know about the history of the city, Liang - Lie said, 'The history of this city is very old. It goes more than twenty- one hundred years back. At the beginning the kings of the Han dynasty had made it as their capital and had made it rich in art and culture. So this city has developed itself as the art and culture museum of China. The kings of different dynasties and the foreign powers have used it in their own ways,' and keeping quiet for a while, she further said, 'I must say, I do not know much about Chinese history and culture.'

'But you are talking about Chinese history. Why do you say you don't know?' I said motivating her to continue.

At my comment she covered her mouth and laughed. We just went on watching her face which was new to us. Slowly uncovering her mouth and gesturing negatively, she said, 'You didn't understand me. What I mean is - I am not a student of history. And I can't tell you in detail.'

'Then what is your subject?' said Gagan.

'I have received my master's degree in business administration and completed two years course in English language,' she said in a simple manner.

'As you have studied business administration, why are you doing this interpreter's job? Don't you get job that suits your qualification?' Gagan said with his usual curiosity.

Interrupting Gagan, I said to Liang-Lie, 'Do tell us more about this city!'

'Oh, yes! we are going off our subject in hand!' She said with a smile on her lips. And we both sat just watching her smiling face, Gagan and myself.

'This city had been the venue from where they had blown the trumpet of revolution against the Chinese dynastic rulers. This very city had also been the venue for the Kuoming- Tang and the communists to conclude their first treaty. So this is another reason why this city is held to be so important,' she said wearing a really serious expression on her pretty face.

Both Gagan and me went on making indefinite queries on this city. Liang-Lie also went on replying our queries with whatever she knew. She had already said that she was not a student of history and she knew not much about Chinese history. But our conversation with her indicates that she knew a lot about it. And we knew a lot more than we were required to know about the Guangzhou city.

This Guangzhou city which was supposed to be the principal trade center of south China. We had had the opportunity to be here before. But we were just for the Trade Fair. So we had to return home, just looking at the display of the Chinese products going around in the Trade Fair halls. That's all. But on this trip we had enough time.

We then discussed to make our program for the city's sightseeing including its suburbs. While I put my amphas on our sightseeing tours to the places of historical importance, Gagan had his own interests. He wanted to go to the old trade centers, towns, harbors and railway stations - places of the old time commercial importance.

The city was very large and we had limited time. So we decided to see the city taking one full day sightseeing tour. And Liang-Lie agreed to take us to the places of interest which suited both our tastes.

We moved out from the hotel lobby to the taxi stand.

We decided to reserve a taxi cab for the whole day. Liang-Lie knowing our intention reserved a taxi cab. We knew nothing about the fare and the place we were visiting.

'He wants hundred fifty Yuans. Is it OK?' she said, fixing with the driver on the fare.

We knew nothing about the reasonable charges. This was the first time that we were out on a sightseeing tour of a Chinese city. Gagan and me exchanged our looks at each other. Both of us consented on the price that Liang-Lie had fixed without uttering a word.

It was a long-shaped Japanese car. One could guess it to be equipped with a large six cylinder engine and the car was beautiful and comfortable. Liang-Lie sat on the front seat and we sat in the back. This soundless sleek foreign car started rolling on the clean and wide roads of the city.

Pointing on the big and high-rise buildings of the city Liang-Lie started giving descriptions - This is so and so hotel and that is so and so hotel and so on. Hearing Liang-Lie describing the hotels, Gagan commented, 'This city looks like the city of hotels, doesn't it?

'No, not that!' Liang-Lie said, 'Since the time this city began to organize Trade Fairs twice a year, the native and foreign traders started pouring into this place. That's why there are so many hotels here. More and larger hotels are under construction.'

We saw construction works going on all around ordinary motorable roads were being concretized. My eyes ran on the construction works. Men and machines were equally in use for construction. We could see at places fly-over roads being constructed and while our own car ran over a fly-over road. I had the feeling that the new part of the city that they were building could, match the cities of the developed countries of the world.'

'It is a beautiful city, isn't it?', said Gagan.

'Yes! It is beautiful! But do you see how many hands are working to make it beautiful?', Liang-Lie said proudly indicating how much labor had gone into making the city beautiful.

There were lines of green trees on both sides of the road. Multicolored flower-beds on the sidewalks as well as in the middle of the roads, ran all along. Such a boulevard is called 'Lu' in Chinese which highlights the beauty of the city.

There was a Five Ram statues on the road which we saw from our car. Liang-lie told us, 'The Five Ram statue gives a glimpse of the Chinese Culture.'

Within a short while we arrived at the Art Gallery of Guangzhou. We had an opportunity to see both the new and old articles of art in the gallery. We came to know that Liang-Lie was an art lover.

But she said she was not an art specialist. And Gagan did not take interest in arts. So we were not so pleased there. However, she went on telling us in detail about many famous artists.

Our next place of visit was the Sun- Yat Sen Memorial Hall. There were articles and materials on display which threw light on the life and work of Dr. Sun-Yat Sen. Sun-Yat Sen was a great Chinese leader who first motivated the Chinese people to rise in rebellion against exploitation and oppression. It was he who taught the Chinese people to respond to the clarion-call of revolution and taught to battle against the old feudal traditions in favor of their democratic rights and interests.

I told Gagan about this in detail. Gagan wanted to know more about him. So addressing Liang-Lie, Gagan said, 'Would you tell us more about Dr. Sun-Yat Sen?'

'Yes!' Liang-Lie said, 'It was Sun-Yat Sen who had played principal role in deposing the Emperor of Chhin dynasty in 1911. Had he got better support and cooperation, today China would have been known to the world in a different way in the map of the world.'

Dr. Sun-Yat Sen was not only the leader of the great revolution of 1911, but, according to Mao-Tsetung, he was a great man because he could adjust himself according to the world trend then prevailing and could take the Chinese masses with that trend for fulfilling their needs and necessities he had solidarity with Russia and he had cooperation of the communist party and he helped the workers and peasants in many ways.

Many writers have described Sun-Yat Sen's life and work in many different ways. But all of them think that the factor that hampered Sun-Yat Sen's objective that he wanted to achieve was the then prevailing war all over the world. And the expansion of the world imperialism was the causal factor that had killed liberty and nationality. Though monarchy was removed in China then, the remnants of the world imperialism and its supremacy still prevailed there. So I agreed with Liang-Lie's views.

As it was time for lunch, we went to a nearby restaurant. Gagan explained Liang-Lie about the kinds of food we liked to eat. And Liang-Lie ordered accordingly.

Reviving the memory of our first trip to China, Gagan said, addressing Liang-Lie, 'Do you know Chang - Sach, our interpreter, when we were here last time?'

'Yes, why not? She is my friend,' she said in a somewhat surprised tone, 'Oh! Do you know Chang-Sach?'

No sooner had we said 'Yes' than she started describing Chang-Sach. She said, 'Chang-Sach is a highly self-respected girl. She never stoops before anyone and she has a great faith in her profession.'

'Yes! We also think so,' I said in agreement with her about Chang-Sach.

'When I have some problem I go to her for advice. In this respect she is senior to me!'

'Oh! Yes! But in age you look about the same.'

'Yes! We are of the same age. But we are different in temperament and courage!'

'Is that so?'

'Different people, different mentalities! Not all the people can be operated like machines! Not all the people have the same problems, nor their wishes are alike. Nor there is the same mental states in all the living beings of Nature's creation. Some people can tolerate cold physically, some can't. Some can go to the tops of high mountains and return, some cannot breathe on high altitudes. Some can march ahead fearlessly, some are devoured by their own doubts and fears!' said Liang-Lie in one breath.

'Yes! She was right. Not all the people have the same mental states. And Chang -Sach was a strong -willed and courageous girl. Yes, I realized this fact now about her.

I think Liang -Lie also lived alone like Chang - Sach and she also came from outside. I think my guess about Liang -Lie was right. I, however, wanted to confirm my guess about Liang - Lie. So I said, 'May I ask you where you come from?'

'Make a guess yourself where I come from,' she said in a teasing manner with a counter question.

Her statement indicated that she was not from this province. And her appearance, her manner of behavior and speech indicated that she was from the North China. But how could I be sure of it? So I said, 'Are you from North China?'

'You really want to know where I come from, don't you?' She said with a smiling expression, 'I come from the Ding - Tchhing city of the Ankwai province. But it is not a big city. And it is near Beijing.'

'So you have studied in Beijing?'

'Yes! I have studied in Beijing'

'Why have you come here leaving the capital?'

I thought I could get better salary here than there. Besides, you cannot get a job so easily. So I came here with the hope that I could get better job and better salary but in vain.

'You are doing fine. You are making friends like us. Don't you think it is good enough?'

'Well, I should say it is not bad. But I am not satisfied!' She grew serious with this statement. There was a change in her facial expression. Now she was not smiling as she used to. We also felt sad. We got discouraged to ask her any more questions.

We now understood that in China no one could stay with their family and live as they liked. Instead, they had to work as they were ordered and go wherever they were sent by the authorities. This was the law of the state and everyone had to obey it.

Changing the context, Gagan said, 'Do you like to travel around the world?'

'Yes, sorry! What did you say? She said somewhat disturbingly.

'Do you want to go outside China?'

'This is my life-long wish!'

'What do you mean?' said Gagan in a surprise.

'I do not want to live in this country even for a moment. And I don't like the people of this country, too, because I have plenty of information about the outside world. And the main thing is that they do not give importance to my skill here.'

'Why? Haven't you got job a suitable to your qualification?'

'No! I haven't got a job for what I am qualified.'

'After my study I was sent to a medical factory which is in the city of Siechya -Chwang in my province. There was not much use of English there. I should have been assigned to a job in the trade administration but they didn't. Instead, they assigned me to a job of checking labels of files, bottles and packages of medicines and drugs. I couldn't work there even for a hundred days. I didn't want to make a machine of myself,' she stopped in the middle

of her statement, heaved a long sigh and remained silent for a while. As she was struggling to control her hurt feelings, it was reflected on her face which was not pleasant for anyone to observe.

I was just watching her face silently. She was feeling sorry for herself on the statements she had made, though she didn't want to.

We were strangers, a few days' guests. What could we do for her? Nothing! We could do nothing except making ourselves sorry over her plight. So I didn't want to ask her questions any more.

In the mean time, Gagan said in a sorrowful voice addressing Liang -Lic, 'Did you leave your job there?'

This question of Gagan produced a change of mood in her suddenly. Laughing an artificial laughter, she said in a joking manner, 'Had I not left my job there how could I be here before you? Are you right in your mind?'

This reply of Liang -Lic made Gagan speechless. He could say nothing. I myself was just busy watching and analyzing the facial expressions of Liang -Lic.

Liang again said, addressing Gagan, 'Please, don't mind. I was just joking. You can understand it.'

'Yes, yes, I understand! Never mind!' said Gagan in a gentle manner.

Liang- Lic went further, 'When you give up a job the state has assigned you, it is very difficult to get another. I roamed around so much in search of a job. I went from city to city, but could get none. I got nothing but only the wear and tear of my dress and shoes. I had to go without food for many days. As I had no dress of my own, I had to put on my mother's dress. Now think! What a miserable condition I have gone through!'

'Oh! Don't you have your father?'

'I have lost my father. But I have mother and also a younger brother and sister. Mother works in a handicraft factory. It is located at a distance of fifteen kilometers from our home. Mother covers sixty kilometers by her bicycle everyday. She is compelled to continue working hard until my younger brother and sister are grown up!'

According to the rules of the factory, one has to work town hours in the morning and town hours in the day, in total eight hours. There is lunch at noon. It is two and half hours' break. Somewhere else it is three hours also. So it gives time for one's private works. But when one is assigned to a job, one has usually no time to think and talk on other matters. It is good for the state. It is in force in every field.

Liang's mother takes her morning meal one hour before and gets out of her home at seven in the morning and comes back from her work by seven in the evening. Though she has leisure at the noon time, she spends it on her coming and going when she comes to feed her two children. And her condition is miserable.

When Gagan asked about her father, Liang said, 'My father used to work in the Red Army after the liberation of 1949. My father was a strong and courageous man. His commander used to assign him to difficult jobs, very often outside the mainland China or to the border post as security guard. When he was near, he used to come home once in fifteen days. When he was far away, he used to come once in two years to see my mother,' she went on, 'Now it is seven years, he has not come back. My father was sent to the inner Mongolia to suppress the uprising there. Since then we have no news of him or we have received no news either from the army from the state.'

'What is the reason that they do not inform you?'

'Well, we don't know. We are told, if he had been killed by the rebels, we would have been informed. Maybe he was killed under marshal law by the army itself. But it is just a guess. We don't really know.'

'Do you think it is possible?'

'Yes! it is possible here!' She said in a sorrowful tone.

Our lunch arrived on the table. Now our attention was drawn towards the food. As we were hungry, we paid attention to the taste of the food. Gagan and myself used spoon and fork, while Liang-Lie used the chopstick.

Using her chopstick and enjoying her food, she said, 'When you are in China, you should know how to use chopstick to eat your food.'

Following her suggestion we tried to use chopsticks. She taught us how to hold the sticks. But it was not easy though. So we started using spoon and fork which was easier for us. When we were taking our lunch, we talked about our next program. Gagan proposed for a sightseeing tour of the old city. As we had plenty of time, I proposed for a sightseeing of other places according to my taste. Liang -Lie understood our views and tastes. So she planned our tours accordingly.

After our lunch, we were out on our sightseeing tour. First of all, we went to the Chen -Klen temple. This place was very clean and beautiful and was still under construction. We were attracted more by its cleanliness and artistic beauty than by its religious importance. Likewise we went to visit another temple, Guang - Shiau temple, which is situated in the middle of a garden and built in a very beautiful style. We also visited the Sik-sa banyan

temple which was constructed in a very ancient time. Now the sun was going down.

According to our program, we were proceeding towards an old city. Here we had seen big buildings built in European style. The roads were very wide with foot-paths of about twenty -feet wide on both the sides of the road. These buildings were four-storied built with the same measurements and looked alike. We got out of the car and started walking on the footpaths.

Shops were crowded. I thought it was evening and so the shops were crowded, but it was not true. The place was crowded all the time, because people come from the countryside for buying and selling things. Many people came also for sightseeing from other parts of the country. So at that time it was always full of crowds here. We went to the shops ourselves. There were price -lists of things in every shop. So it was easy for the customers.

We went on looking at big and small shops. Out of curiosity, Gagan said, 'Are these shops private or belong to the state?'

'They belong to the state.'

'But people are seen working so hard as if the shops belong to themselves!'

'They have to. If they don't, they are expelled next day by the manager. So they must work as if the shops are their own. And they have to please the manager.'

'There is no private shop around here?'

'Almost not! One can sell small home products. Even for that you have to get permission from the state.'

We were moving ahead with our conversation. There were police posts here and there at different points of the city. There was a traffic. Some police were racing on their moter-bikes, some were just strolling in the footpaths. Whether these policemen were running on their motorbikes or they were passing by us, they certainly threw their glances at us which looked a little bit odd.

We nearly reached the gate of the cultural park in the course of strolling through the shopping area. We found our car also parked there. Liang -Lie asked us whether we would like to go into the park. We said 'Yes' and all three of us went into the park. There we saw nice play- centers with modern equipments for children to play. For their amusement, in the middle of the park there is a large open theater. Every evening they started, we were told, music and dance from seven to ten and presented typical Chinese culture. As evening was approaching people were also gathering for the show.

People were standing on queue at the children's railway, air-plane, merry-round, etc. We also found crowds of people at places where they staged musclemen's physical show, magic show on motorcycle race or chines like that. In the evening time if people gathered at the open park it was but natural.

In the course of our strolling in the park, we reached to a corner of the park where there was a beautiful corner with multicolored flowers. Here I wanted to sit and rest for a while. I said so to our party. I and Liang-Lie went to a nearby bench and sat while Gagan went further strolling to another corner of the park.

I slowly said to Liang-Lie, 'Liang! I found China to be a nice country. I am also impressed by the development you have achieved here. But I find old China also good. Now can you tell me more about China? I want to know as much as possible.'

Liang-Lie smiled and turned toward me and said, 'You have said what you have seen. New things attract people. And this is also your impression. You cannot judge people by their outfits whether they are honest or dishonest, good or bad. So try to see the inside, not just outside. And what you see inside, say that!'

I felt Liang was expressing her suppressed grievances. It is not that I did not understand her. But when she gave twists to my simple statements, I was discouraged to ask her any more questions. Now when she said something I just responded with laughter! Turning towards me, she said, 'What do you know about China?'

I said, 'Since Mao's communist party took over China and turned it into a communist state in 1949 A.D., the world community knows nothing about it. China and the Chinese people have been isolated more and singled out politically, economically and socially. Now I want to know who benefitted from it and who are in disadvantage under it? Such information I want to get.'

'Study me! I represent all-China!' Liang-Lie said with high sentiments and feelings.

'Yes! every member of the society represents the conditions of the country!' I said.

In the meantime Gagan arrived. Addressing me he said in Nepalese, 'Do you know, there are so many bad girls here too!'

'How do you know it?' I demanded.

'When I left you and went alone strolling, some girls followed me and started speaking to me in broken English.'

'All right! sit down,' I said.

As we were talking in our own language, Liang-Lie could not understand what we were talking about. However she was showing her curiosity in our conversation sometimes watching my face, sometimes Gagan's.

I didn't want to mention or discuss about it with Liang-Lie. So changing the context I said, addressing Liang, 'When do they start the show at the open theater? Are we going to see the Chinese Cultural Program or not?'

'If you want to see the program, you have to wait. It is too early yet,' she said.

Yes! It was too early. If we wanted to see the program we should either stroll around or talk to kill time. I was not in mood for talking. In the meantime, Gagan said, addressing Liang-Lie, 'I want to ask you one thing, if you don't mind!'

'Yes! All right! Go ahead!'

'Are there bad girls here too who sell their body?'

'Why not? There are so many', She said without any sort of uneasiness.

'We don't even imagine that there are such things in China!'

'This is the condition which is the product of helplessness and haplessness!' Liang-Lie said out of her own experiences.

'Are they permitted by the government itself?'

'No. They are neither permitted, nor controlled. When people do not get jobs as they like, their mentality gets corrupted and gives birth to social evils.'

I supported Liang's view nodding my head. She had power in her voice. She also showed maturity. Firm in her ideas, she was also frank and courageous in her expressions of thoughts and opinions. This is how I understood Liang-Lie.

We left the park and moved towards the hotel. We invited Liang for dinner. But she told us about her inability to give us her company in dinner as she had already given time to her friend.

In a joking manner, Gagan said, 'You say, you have a friend, female or male?'

'Well! Male friend, that is, my boy-friend!'

'Are you going to a night club?'

'You are right!'

'Can you introduce your boy-friend to us?'

'Yes! All right!'

Liang-Lic wrote the address of the hotel where the club was. Handing us the address, she said, 'Show this address to any taxi driver, he will take you to the hotel where the night club is.'

'Well! We will try our best to come,' we said. And reminding Liang, Gagan said, 'From today you will be waiting for us in the lobby till 8.15 p.m. OK?'

We decided to go to the night club. It was now 06 p.m. We still had two hours. We had no local currency so we went to the bank to change money. There was a line before the money changing counter. A man stranding on the line said 'Hello!' to us. In response I also said, 'Hello!' His appearance was pure Chinese. But he spoke fluent English.

'Where do you come from?' the Chinese gentleman said.

'We are from Nepal,' I said, 'And you?'

'I am from San-Francisco, USA.'

Then we exchanged our name cards. His name was Philip Chang. He was a businessman. He dealt in ready made garments.

Next morning we had to leave for the capital city of Fu-Chan. Our flight was in the early morning. As we had to check out before seven in the morning, we did the packing also. Then we went to a restaurant for dinner. We found the restaurant very crowded. So we moved to another one. This restaurant was also crowded. When we were looking for an empty table, somebody said, 'Hello!' When I turned towards the voice, I saw Philip Chang whom we had met few hours before.

'Are you looking for a table?' He said.

'Yes.'

'It is overcrowded. If you like, you can come to this table.' We went to his table and took our seats. He was very happy to find us with him. He had already ordered for his dinner so he gave us the menu and we ordered dinner for ourselves.

We came to know that Philip Chang could not mix up with the local Chinese. That means, they were suspicious to one another. Philip Chang was also a Chinese. But his manners were Western. The Chinese who lived outside mainland China are called overseas Chinese. And the overseas Chinese are looked down upon by the local Chinese, so Philip Chang was not happy with the local Chinese. And this was one reason why Philip Chang was drawn so close towards us and made friends with us.

'What shall I call you? Philip or Chang?' I said addressing Philip Chang, 'Half of your name is Chinese and the other half is English. Which one do you like and which I should call?'

At what I said, he laughed for a while and said, 'You are a clever man! You are trying to study me. But I will say nothing. You can call me whatever you like, or whatever you find easier.'

With such a friendly talking we were drawing closer towards each other. He was also trying to get as much information as he could get about us, so he was asking so many questions. His voice was forceful and his manners were very pleasant. He was about forty in age.

As he was bright and smiling in his face and forceful in his voice, he was also quick to give expression to what he thought in his mind. I was given an indication by him to guess these qualities in his character when he suggested Gagan to adjust the collar of his coat. Soon we were feeling at home with him.

We talked about China - both the new and the old. We also discussed about the ancient, medieval and modern history of Chinese culture and civilization. I found him to be well-versed in Chinese culture, religion and history. He had done comparative studies of the Western and Chinese Cultures.

In the process of our discussion, he said, 'Chinese history goes back two thousand years before Christ, whereas at that time, they had nothing in the name of culture, religion and civilization in Europe and America. Asia is the cradle of human civilization. China and India have been the pioneers in this process.'

'Now they have no religion and culture in China. Do they?' said Gagan.

'Well! Yes, we are told, they don't. Chinese Cultural Revolution destroyed the religion and culture of ancient China, because they believe, religion and culture supports feudalism and imperialism, thus they try to obliterate the history, culture and religion of ancient China in the process of building a new culture,' said Chang and went further, 'But they will fail in their attempts. And the Chinese themselves will rise up to protect their ancient religion, art and culture. Such a long history of Chinese religion, culture and civilization cannot be blotted out by the blood of the Chinese people. This fact has been driven home to the authorities of the despotic government here. Because they are Chinese themselves!' said Chang and stopped abruptly.

'We are told, now there are no religious people in China. Is it so?', I said with curiosity.

'The Cultural Revolution was very dangerous. We cannot describe it in such a short time. The one thing you should understand is that culture and

religion established and developed over such a long period of history cannot be destroyed by guns,' he further continued, 'Now they are ready to die to predate their ancient religion and culture here!' said Chang with high sentiments and feelings, 'They had to stop the cultural revolution in favor of preserving of the ancient culture, so now they are reviving their religion here.'

We listened to him in rapt attention. He further said, 'In ancient China there were a number of religions. Later Buddhism became the main religion here. Likewise, among the ancient religions, the one that is practised by the people still today is what is called "Taoism" or "Tao -Ziao". This faith states that there is "the King of the sky in Chinese Thai -Sang Lao- Zuing". It is this "King of the sky" that runs the universe and He is God. The people who profess this religion are scattered in different parts of China. People professing this religion cannot marry; and they are called "Taos".

We did not know that they were now reviving their religion in China. We also came to know that Philip Chang was working in China for the last five years. Since the time he was here he had toured almost all parts of China. Though he toured as a business man, yet he took this opportunity, according to his interest, for studying ancient China. And, we came to know the reason for his interest to study the old China was the migration of his family.

When Philip Chang was just three years old, his parents had migrated to America. He had a very happy memory of the time they had sailed for weeks. He knew nothing except that his parents had told him that he was born in China. This was what he said.

He further told about himself, 'About hundred years ago, my grandfather had established a huge textile factory with one thousand looms under one roof in Shanghai. All those machines were imported from Germany. The factory had been a big success. Later, three more such factories were set up within ten years. Now the machines were imported from England and the factories were set up in the cities of Neing -bo, Wohän, and Ziang-xi. At that time we were one of the few textile mill owners of China. But who knows what destiny had in store! We had difficulty to remain in China. So my parents talking to their own children, their sons and one daughter had crossed the Pacific Ocean in 1948.'

Now we could find no courage to ask him any more questions, because when he was telling his family story, he grew serious and his face was clouded by painful feelings of fear. And, unconsciously, his eyes also were getting filled with tears. Then he remained silent, and we were silent too.

In the meantime dinner arrived breaking the silence that was over our table. Philip Chang invited us to join him, we felt so close that we could not

overlook his invitation to join him for the dinner. In the meantime our dishes also arrived and we all partook, sharing all the dishes.

He told us about his works, 'My father was a textile expert, so it was easier for us to go into garment business.'

'When did you start this business?'

'Well! Father started this business since 1950.'

Chang said, 'In San Francisco, more than fifty percent of the people are of Chinese origin. They started their migration since 1910. The Chinese who migrated there were given help by the government of that country. Then my father had started his business from scratch. But now we are coming back to our former position economically.' He said and went further, 'Liberal atmosphere is necessary for human achievements. Don't you think so?'

What I could say was just 'Yes!' to his gesture to me. Gagan was busy eating. Sometimes he was seen trying to eat with chopsticks. Philip Chang was also eating slowly. He was more interested in talking than in eating.

Suddenly Philip Chang said, 'Do you know! We used to buy textile goods from our former mill which now belongs to the state as far as possible. And some garments we used to make here were imported to the USA. Since my arrival here I am not buying textile goods from other mills. But you know!' He went on, 'The mill is at loss, we are at good profit! But this could be chance.'

'Truth is truth. I said supporting him on his statement.

'I feel it to be something quite strange!' It was his faith speaking out.

Along with new information, we finished our dinner too. Philip Chang, expressing his happiness, said, 'This evening you are my guests!'

'No! No. sir!'

'No! I have invited you to my table. Therefore you are my guests. I should pay the bill!'

Upon this we could say nothing. We had known him just a few hours before. Now we were so familiar as if we knew each other overlong years and we were old friends. According to Chinese traditions, he treated us as his guests with high respect. And we just had to accept it.

We got out of the restaurant and proceeded towards the lobby. It was about 8 p.m. now. As we were now parting, we shook hands with Philip Chang. We were told, Philip was going to Shanghai the next morning. We told him, we would also be going to Shanghai after three days. Upon this, giving his address of Shanghai, he said, 'Sure! you will see me in Shanghai, O.K? We will have nice times again. Good- night! Bye! Bye! see you again!'

'Good -night! Bye! Bye! see you!'

Parting with Philip Chang we moved out of the lobby and went towards the taxi-stand. We told the taxi driver to take us to the Hotel Newmen Land.

The hotel was not far. Liang -Lie and a young man were sitting at a corner of the gate. We got out of the taxi and proceeded towards them. Liang -Lie said introducing her boy -friend, 'This is Mr. Chau-Yang, my boy friend.'

'Hello!' We said, shaking hands.

Chau -Yang spoke English. He asked our introduction in English. We also told him everything about us in English. Liang -Lie had also told him many things in praise about us. Chau- Yang informed us about this.

In course of our conversation, we came to know that Liang -Lie and Chau-Yang came from the same province. They were distant relatives. But they could marry. They were going to marry when they would be provided with a house by the state. They had both applied for the house. Now they were living in the dormitories of their offices. We came to know that the reason of the delay of their marriage was because they didn't have the house yet.

Liang -Lie and Chau- Yang were of the same age. Their appearance matched with each other's. And I thought they would make a good couple of themselves. Their selection was good.

Chau -Yang worked in a company which made stone statues and exported them to Europe and America. We also came to know that was the first time that Chau had invited Liang to this drama club for entertainment.

In the club a number of pairs of boys and girls were sitting at the tables. We also went to a table and took our seats. I said, addressing Chau -Yang and Liang -Lie, 'This night you are our guests here. You order what you like to eat and drink.'

Upon this they said they had already taken their dinner. So they would take only soft drinks.

They were not interested in eating and drinking. What they were interested in was dancing.

Now here we were spectators, they were performers. With the timings of music, couples of boys and girls got up from their tables, some of them began dancing, others strolling around during and after the dance. They came back to their tables for rest. And eating and drinking also went on. We also went on to the floor and shook our bodies for a while just to make ourselves appear civilized.

- Amid the musical rhythms and flashes of lights this musical evening passed with its own rhythms into the night. It was now already 10 p.m.. We were preparing to move. Liang -Lie and Chau -Yang came with us to our taxi.

'Good-night! Bye! Bye! See you again!' they said.

And we responded with the same, 'Good -night! Bye! Bye! See you again!' And we added, 'Advance congratulations! for your happy life together!'

Chapter 6

China Town : This was a small trading center where one could have glimpses of traditional Chinese culture. It had long and wide stone-paved roads, giving the picture of old China, and it provided us with new experiences. There were all kinds of goods for sale. Both of us, Gagan and me, observed all the goods. There were many things to see and many places to go in Shanghai. This was the first day that we were enjoying an outing.

We had arrived here yesterday via Fu-Chau and Ziangsie. We had finished our business here by yesterday and today morning. We didn't have much business here. We just had to observe goods and we had finished that. We had appointments on new business the next morning. Now we had come here just to see the 'Zade Buddha'. It was a beautiful place. There was a big garden. There were streamlets flowing here and there in the garden, bridges spanned over the streamlets to make the old Chinese style really very charming.

There were temples on the road-sides running through the garden. Every temple had a huge statue of Buddha depicting different incarnations of the Buddha. Before the statue a large pot for burning incense was invariably placed. People came and placed their burning incense in the pot to worship the Buddha. The priests in their black robes were seen offering their prayers with their drums and bells in their own language. In every temple there were hundreds of priests in the black robes busy in their religious service. After passing by a number of temples we came to one special temple. And this was the temple of the 'Zade Buddha' whose statue engraved in a piece of marble was about four feet long. The statue with the right hand under the head and the legs drawn upward and laid on the right side was very beautiful indeed. On the forehead of the statue was placed an almond-shaped piece of zade - a precious

stone . Because of this zade- decorated statue the temple was called the Zade Buddha temple perhaps. When one saw the statue one naturally knelt down and bowed one's head before it whether one was religious or not. Whether a person knew about Buddhism or not, he bowed before the statue on his knees.

When we came out of the garden after visiting the temples, we found our taxi missing. The concerned company had given us a vehicle. We thought the vehicle would be waiting for us. But it had left. We could not find another taxi to go back to the hotel. So we thought of walking and hiring a taxi whenever we found one on the way. We walked for hours on end, but did not find a taxi.

We had thought we would get a taxi on the way. We would show our card to the taxi driver and he would take us to the hotel. We took it so simply. But, in reality, it was not to be so. We kept walking on and on. We were getting so tired, but could get no taxi. They did not stop when we gestured them to stop. We were so tired that our legs refused to carry us any further. On the way we did not find anyone who could speak English, even a few simple sentences.

It took us quite some time to realize that we could phone the hotel and ask them to send us a taxi, and so started looking for a telephone from shop to shop. We found telephone nowhere. When we found one, it was locked and worked just for in-coming calls. For three hours we are just going round and round of the Shanghai city. Finally we came to a post office from where we called the hotel and asked them to send us a taxi with a driver who could speak English. They instructed us not to go anywhere and remain where we were.

There was no way that we could go anywhere. We were so damn tired. We went to a nearby shop and asked for stools to take our seats and rest for a while. The workers in the shop talked about us among themselves and laughed. After a long time of our waiting the taxi arrived. Getting out of the taxi the driver came to us and said in English, 'Are you looking for a taxi?'

'Yes,' we said. We were very happy to get a taxi with an English speaking driver. We shook hands with the driver. And expressing our happiness I said, 'Oh! You speak English! We are glad to meet you.'

'No! I do not know much English. Only little. I am only learning English.'

'What is your name?'

'My name is Li- Shautong. But you can call me Li.'

We approached the car. The car was a Mercedes benz-a long- shaped, slick, six cylinder car, used only by the luxurious people. When I saw this car used as a taxi here I was surprised. So I said, 'Is petrol cheap here?'

'Yes! Not bad. It is seven Zhau per litre,' said Li in reply.

I found it to be cheap on calculation. Seven Zhau makes one Yuan. If one litre petrol costs only one yuan, it is the cheapest petrol in the world - I thought in my mind. That's why they were running the six cylinder car as a taxi here.

We took the back seats in the car. The car ran now towards Tong -Ping Huwa, that is, the Central Hotel where we were staying. In a soundless, comfortable Mercedes car moving on the clean and broad roads of Shanghai, we felt extremely comfortable.

'Which places did you go so far?' Li said, taking a look in the mirror of the car.

'We have just visited the 'Zade Buddha' temple. We have yet to visit the other places.'

'Are you here as tourists or on business?'

'Yes! First we are businessmen, secondly we are tourists.'

'Yes! All right! I can help you on both matters!'

When we were not able to make out what he said I asked him to be clear. We understood that he wanted us to reserve his taxi and he would take us around the city of Shanghai and would also arrange meetings with different businessmen in the city as he knew a number of business men here. Thus he offered his help in our business dealings.

We said we would like to talk with him on this matter. Li said, 'In this city you can find no driver as experienced as I am.'

Maybe, he was right. But he was obviously trying to make money rather than anything else.

'Why? Do not people drive taxies here who know English?' Said Gagan.

'Those who are educated do not want to be taxi drivers. Those who are drivers are not really educated people. Driving is a hard job!'

'How did you learn your English?'

Showing a book, he said, 'I study this book morning and evening and practise my English with foreign visitors like you. Such is my school where I learn my English.'

Though his English was not perfect, he could express himself tolerably well. It was difficult to find people in the city who could speak English as much as he did. We had just had a bitter experience of this fact here, so we decided to take his taxi. If we took his taxi, we didn't need an interpreter. So during our stay in Shanghai, we would use Li's taxi. With this decision, I said, addressing Li, 'If we take your taxi for a full day, how much will you charge?'

'If you take it through the hotel, they will charge you two hundred fifty Yuans. If you deal with me direct, I charge you only one hundred fifty yuans. When you pay at hotel, you pay F.E.C. When you pay me you pay remebi. If you do it, you pay only one hundred F.E.C. That means, if you change your F.E.C. in the market you get one hundred and fifty remebi. So if you take my taxi directly, it is very cheap for you,' said Li non-stop.

'The petrol is cheap, but why are the charges so high?', said Gagan.

Li did not want to answer this question.

Repeating the same argument, he said, 'Never buy anything through the hotel or make any business arrangement through it. If you contact outside directly, it is fifty per cent cheaper. Such is the policy here, that means, they make difficult for the foreigners here so that they cannot stay here long.'

With such talks and discussions we arrived at the hotel. Before getting out of the car, we told Li that we wanted to hire his taxi for today and tomorrow. He should wait for us. We would be back from our room within a short while.

He said, 'This time you make the payment in FEC, because it is arranged by the hotel. Afterwards it is between us.'

After finishing our business, we got out of the hotel for sightseeing. We found Li-Shautong waiting for us. Getting in the car, we said, 'Where are you taking us? Make a programme.'

'There are many places to go. Where do you want to go? New places or old places?'

'Let us go first to nearby places, O.K.?'

'O.K.! we go through old cities towards old dock area, how do you like?'

'O.K.,' we said just that and nothing more.

The car started and moved along open and broad roads with separate side walks for the pedestrians and bicyclists and with rows of green trees on sides. The roads looked as if they were just cleaned and were so smooth and cars from all over the world were running on them. Big and nice looking cars were running as taxis.

We went right into an old city. We found better palaces here than in London and Berlin. There were markets here and there. But there were also broad footpaths like in Guangzhou and houses overlooking them. Looking at the city, one could guess that none of the houses here was less than hundred years old.

Though Shanghai had its own history, it is renowned as a trade center for Japan, Korea, Mongolia and north China, and over the centuries, it was

made also a monopoly trade center by the traders of Europe, America, Japan as well as India. As Shanghai was a principal trade and industry center in those days, it had communication with the major parts of the world. From the middle of the nineteenth century, for one hundred years, foreign traders had increasingly established their supremacy over this city as their monopoly market. From business point of view, during this period, trade had tremendously on the increase. And the world had to recognize Shanghai as one of the biggest and most important cities of the world.

As we reached the outskirts of the city, we parked the car and moved towards the dock area. There were 'Sea-face houses', houses facing towards the sea, which were built of stones. The dock didn't seem to be natural but was man-made. They had made the waters as deep as to make it suitable to harbor the ships. The work was really praiseworthy. Though we could not get any information when the dock was built, yet one could guess it was built at least over eighty or ninety years ago.

We saw thousands of people coming to the sea-sides for their outings. And we were among them ourselves. One could see some foreigners also there. It was April. So the weather was sunny and bright. It was pleasant! Gagan was busy taking pictures. I kept myself engrossed contemplating on the huge buildings.

I kept on contemplating - these buildings must have belonged to some individuals some time in the past. And the individuals must have built these houses to enjoy pleasurable life in them. Are the owners of these houses dead? Or are they still alive? If they are alive, where are they? And in what condition?

'How are these buildings used now?' I said, addressing Li.

Pointing Li said, 'On this side are the offices of the central government and on that side, the offices of the state government. And on this side, are the offices of the local trading companies.'

'Do you have your own house?' I said to Li out of curiosity.

'I don't have my own house. I have a state-owned house. But I pay only ten yuans for two small rooms per month.'

'Oh! Good! And your wife and children?'

'I have one small daughter. And my wife works in a shop as a saleswoman.'

'You don't have a son?'

'No. That's the problem! I say to my wife to have a son, though we have to pay fine. But she refuses!'

'Why do you have to pay fine to have a son?'

'If you have more than one child, the state fines you. In China, a son is valued more than a daughter.'

'Don't you think the son and the daughter the same?'

'Yes! They are the same. But what to do.... we like son! But helpless!' Li put on a very sad look.

'Don't you think it is good?'

'How can I say it is not good? It is said the law of the state is good, so we don't complain. When we want to complain, there is no place to complain. Chairman Mao said, "Chinese people must occupy an important place in the world." At that time there was no plan for birth control. So it is difficult to say what is good and what is not good,' said Li in his own way.

Gagan joined us and the conversation between Li and myself stopped abruptly. We passed through an open space to another garden. There were chairs. We took our seats on those chairs. We also started studying different types of faces of the Chinese people. In the meantime, Li-Shautong started inquiring about us. He was serious in his inquiry. So I paid attention to him. According to him, there was a very important person in town who wanted to meet foreign businessmen. He thought this meeting could promote our business.

Expressing our willingness to meet the important person, I said, 'All right! Please make an appointment for the meeting tomorrow, anytime, O.K.?'

Expressing his happiness, he moved towards the nearby telephone booth and gave a call to the important person. From the telephone booth he gestured me to come. I went to the telephone booth. Li informed me, the time for meeting had been fixed at 2 p.m. next day and an interpreter who spoke English. Li appeared very happy. Putting down the receiver he said, 'If you succeed in your business deal, take care of me.'

'All right! Let's have the meeting first,' and assuring Li, I said, 'It is not the matter of your worry. It is our worry!'

Hearing me what I said, Li appeared assured. It was about evening. We expressed our willingness to go for some shopping. Li said, 'What currencies do you have? - US dollar, F.E.C or remebi?'

'We have dollars and F.E.C. We don't have remebi. How can we?'

'If you use remebi in your shopping, it is profitable for you.'

'How can you manage to get hundred and fifty remebi for one hundred F.E.C and five hundred and fifty remebi for one hundred US dollars?'

We trusted him and gave him hundred dollars for exchange. He told us to stay where we were for a while and drove himself away. He returned after half an hour. Then we moved ahead towards the shopping center.

Li said, 'I will first take you to the Friendship Store which is only for the foreigners. You don't buy things in the store. You just look for things that you want to buy. I will buy you the same things for half the price you pay in the store.'

It was impossible to refuse the proposition that he put to us. So, both of us, Gagan and me, agreed to the proposition. Outspoken Li-Shautong, who always liked to be frank, said, 'The way the state treats the foreigners goes against our Chinese culture. We should help the guests. We should feed the guests, even if we have to go without food in doing so. Only then the foreign guests will remember our hospitality for ever. But now the treatment is just the opposite.'

Our well-wisher Li drove us to the Friendship Store. Stopping the taxi before the Store he said, 'We are not allowed inside the Store. You go in and look at the goods in all the four stories of the building and come back. I will be waiting for you here.'

It was really a large store what they called 'Friendship Store'. This Friendship Store was meant for the foreigners who were residents in Shanghai and the foreigners who came to visit the city as tourists or businessmen. There are all kinds of goods here. There are food and drinks. There are luxury goods and other necessary articles. We took a look of all the items and articles, though we had to buy nothing. The store was in the four-storied building. It took about half an hour to go around the whole of the store and come down to the taxi.

'Now! Let's go,' I said

Li started the taxi and moved on.

'Now tell me what do you want to buy?' said Li.

'We wanted to buy shoes, bags and caps.'

We arrived at the shopping center. The place was so crowded that you could not do shopping with your choice.

'Is this place always overcrowded like this?' I said, addressing Li.

'Yes, it is crowded during the mid-day or lunch time and in the early evening time,' said Li.

We found the goods to be cheap here. Gagan and me bought two pairs of shoes for eighteen yuans per pair. All the shoes here had price-tags from three to twenty yuans. I also bought some leather bags and caps and Gagan bought a few pairs of small shoes.

We bought some vests and shirts in another store. We were told that Chinese umbrellas were nice. So I bought some umbrellas for four Yuans per piece, and some other small things. All the shops, we came to know, belonged to the state.

'Things are cheap here,' I said turning towards Li.

'It is cheap for you. Not for the local Chinese people!'

'How is that?'

'A worker earns only two Yuans by working eight hours and it takes his nine days' work without food to buy a pair of shoes that you have bought. Now think for yourself how can it be cheap for the workers?' Li said expressing the grievances long suppressed in the depth of his mind.

When Gagan was busy buying small things, I was busy in conversing with Li.

'I think you earn twenty times more per day, am I right?'

'You are right,' said Li, 'I can earn that much when opportunity comes. If not, just like the worker. I can earn no more.'

'Under what arrangement do you run your taxi? On daily contract basis, or on the basis of the mileage covered? Here you don't have the meter system too. How do you keep the accounts for the company?' I raised a question concerning Li's own profession.

I had thought that my question might put him in an odd situation. But it had no such effect on him. He said, 'We don't have taxi meter. But we have mile meter. So we present our accounts on the basis of the mile meter to the company. And we can make, at least, ten or fifteen yuans daily. Sometimes we make hundred yuans too. And nowadays one has to pay one thousand yuans as bribe to become a driver?'

'I don't understand what you mean?' I said in somewhat curious manner, and to make it sure of Li's point I further said, 'Is it difficult to own a taxi here?'

'Now in our country, the workers who make the highest earning, are the taxi drivers. Everybody knows it, so people are attracted to this job here more and more these days,' said Li in a breath.

'Oh, Yes?' I said, paying serious attention to what Li was saying. And I found the principle of control and balance had not been applied in the field of this profession here. According to Li's version, he could make more than one thousand yuans every month.

Saving is good, no doubt. But according to the system in this country, it was not the individual who was to save, but the state, because the individual

was the property of the state. And the property of the state was the property of the individual. Therefore, individual saving was not necessary here.

The willingness to save among the workers had its beginning already and might spread throughout the country which was but natural.

It was evening already. Gagan was still busy looking at goods in the store. Approaching towards Gagan, I announced, 'Should we move now?'

'Let's go', said Gagan and moved towards the exit. And Li and me got out of the store following him.

We found people eating their dinner, setting their dinner tables out in the footpaths. As our car was parked a bit farther from the road, it took us about ten minutes to reach the car.

'Would you like to see the night-time Shanghai?' Li proposed to give us some entertainment.

Gagan wanted to go. So I said, 'All right! Let's go! First let's go to hotel and dump our things, O.K.?' I said to Li.

Gagan asked Li about dinner at which Li said, 'I don't know what type of food you like to eat. Anyway, there are many open restaurants at the sea-side where we are going now.'

'All right. We will eat wherever you say,' I said, accepting his proposition.

Arriving at the hotel, we dumped the stuffs that we had purchased during the day. As the evening was getting cold, we dressed accordingly and got out of the hotel. We had decided to spend the evening according to the program made by Li.

We found Shanghai to be a most beautiful city in the night. Tall hotel buildings, newly built skyscrapers, the shining street lights, the multi-colored neon shines and advertisements written in Chinese - all-together appeared to have made the entire city sparkle with lights!.. and..lights! as if the city had pulled over it a veil of lights and made it look extremely beautiful like a new bride.

Li went on describing the important places and buildings. He also told us about the colleges and the universities here as we moved along.

It was a sea-coast. The place also was overcrowded. After parking the car, when I got out, I was lashed by a draught of cool breeze. I felt it quite pleasant! Strolling around for a while, we went to an open restaurant.

'Do you want to go to a night club from here?' asked Li.

'But we do not understand Chinese songs,' I said.

'Yes, you do not understand the language of songs. But everyone understands the language of music. You do not need language for beauty. Do you?' said Li, giving twist to matters.

'What do you mean? You mean beautiful girls?'

'Yes, that's what I mean. If you like, as many as you want. No problem. You just have to tell me.'

I had known about it already in Guangzhou. So it didn't surprise me. Gagan seemed to have taken interest in it. But reading my attitude, he could say nothing.

Now in this country also, times were changing, social purity was disappearing, discipline was breaking down, immorality and social corruptions were on the rise. All this was the product of the immature system they were trying to maintain here. Nobody could stop it, nor control it.

I didn't pay attention to what Li said. He also didn't mention it again. Gagan was glancing at Li and me by turn. He also could say nothing. To show that I would rather like to pay attention to the rolling waves of the sea, I turned towards the sea and tried to concentrate on the waves.

After dinner, we moved on for more sightseeing of the city and finally arrived at the hotel. Telling Li to come at 9 a.m. next day, we parted our ways.

Next morning when I awoke, it was about 9 a.m. By the time we were ready, it was about 10 a.m. Li had already given us a phone call at 9 a.m. from the reception. So we hurried up and got out of the hotel. It was 10 a.m. already.

'Wherever we go, we must meet the man with whom we have made an appointment for 2 p.m., remember? So, you make the program accordingly.'

Li also had it in his mind. So he said, 'I know. But you have to take your lunch also. So should we go to the museum first?'

We arrived at the museum. Li hurried to get the tickets. But he forgot in his hurry that foreigners required to pay for the tickets in FEC. He came back to get the FEC. The difference between the Chinese and the foreigners was shown not only in the currency, but also in the price which differed hundred per cent.

In the museum, we saw the displays of the Chinese heroes and heroic events of the modern history of the Chinese society along with the displays of the ancient Chinese art and culture. As all the descriptions in the museum were in Chinese and Li also was not enough qualified to explain us the articles and displays in the museum, we could not get a detailed information. Actually it was necessary that if we wanted to get information on the ancient history, art and culture, we had to hire a qualified specifically trained guide. But as we

were using our driver as our guide also we were deprived of detailed information.

As we had not much time, we got out of the museum and went for taking our lunch. After lunch right at 2 p.m. we started for the place where we had to meet the important man with whom we had an appointment.

Just a few minutes to 2 p.m. our car stopped in front of a closed gate. The gate opened with the sound of a horn. A Chinese security guard opened the gate. After our entry through the gate, it was closed. We drove about hundred meters and stopped in front of the door of a beautiful bungalow. We got out of the car. The place looked like a fortress belonging to some petty prince. Turning back I saw a beautiful garden with stone-paved lanes, and on both sides of the lanes were trees with multi-coloured blossoms.

Addressing me, Li said, 'You go inside with him. I will be waiting for you here.'

A gentle and mature looking man in the blue suit welcomed us in English, 'You are welcome on behalf of our Sir Mr. Chen-Guo-Qing!

We shook our hands with the gentleman and expressed our gratitude for the welcome and followed him into the house. Entering a room, I saw a middle-aged man sitting on a comfortable armchair at a distance in the room. No sooner had we entered the room than he got up and moved towards us. We shook hands and showed our formality. He requested us to sit on the sofa placed nearby his chair. And he went to sit on his chair himself. Between us was seated an interpreter.

The room was a big hall. In one of the corners of the room I could see spiralling stairs which looked very beautiful. From here one could see some of the rooms on the first floor. There in the middle of the hall was hanging about a hundred kilo English fern. On both sides of the door were two life-size metal statues in traditional Chinese costumes. There were life size mirrors made of Belgium cut glasses hanging around the hall and English-made tables were suitably placed against the walls around the hall, too.

Mr. Chen-Guo-Qing began to talk in Chinese. The interpreter listened him and then translated into English for us. We also went on answering in English. Not Gagan, I was answering most of the questions.

'What kinds of trade you deal in, may we know?' I said to begin with.

'We deal in general trade within the country and deal in export and import business with the foreign countries.'

'What kind of export you deal in and likewise what kind of import you do?'

'All kinds of electronic goods that our country needs we import. We also import small, medium and heavy machineries. And we export all kinds of goods that we produce in our country.'

'What are the major countries with whom you do the import and export business?'

'Well, Japan, Hongkong, Singapore, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and the United States of America are the major countries with whom China has special trade relations. And with Pakistan and India we have good relations.'

'Oh! Then you are big traders!'

'We are not big traders. We are simply traders.'

'We are looking for big traders.'

'I understood the situation. We were giving him much importance while taking an inferior position ourselves. They might be taking us as petty traders, but Li-Shautong has, with all sincerity, told them that we were big and important traders. So why should we take an inferior position compared to them? When such thoughts crossed my mind, I immediately told Gagan about the trader. I said 'Gagan, Let's stage a drama. Otherwise we will appear as fools and they will throw us away like the pieces of useless stone.'

Gagan understood me and started the drama. Changing his sitting position, he began, 'I do not look after much of the work of my company. Here, this is my secretary. He looks after all the work of the company. This time I have come to China because my secretary told me so much about this country and requested me to pay a visit to this country so I am here with you. I am happy that I got an opportunity to make friends with you. I am really so happy!'

Now I had to present myself as the secretary of Gagan and address Gagan as 'Sir!' from now on as long as we were in that room. It was also necessary that I addressed Chen-Guo-Qing also as 'Sir!'

A girl was pouring hot tea into our tea cups without interruption. Our lips were drawn towards the tea cups by the sweet flavor of the hot tea.

Chen-Guo-Qing did not speak much. Maybe everything had already been told to the interpreter. So only the interpreter was speaking. I also thought of a strategy to make our position better and catch upon his loopholes. So I asked, 'I wonder whether Sir Chen-Guo-Qing is a government authority?'

'No, he is not,' said the interpreter immediately.

'And this bungalow?'

'This bungalow also belongs to Sir Chen-Guo-Qing himself, not to the state'.

'How is it possible that the individual property is secure here?'

'The fact is that Sir Chen-Guo-Qing has handed over most part of his property to the state voluntarily. He has kept only this bungalow for himself.'

Was there any law that gave protection to individual property? It might or may not. We didn't have to wreck our mind on the question. But the individual tried his best to protect what was necessary for his life. This was human nature.

Sipping his tea, Gagan said, 'Let's return to the subject for which we are here.'

When the interpreter mentioned it to Sir Chen-Guo-Qing, talk began again with his permission. Now the process of telling me in English by the interpreter what Sir Chen-Guo-Qing said in Chinese and what Sir Gagan said in Nepali I had to translate into English for the interpreter for the Chinese side, began.

'Is it possible for you to supply the electric and electronic goods from Japan?'

'Yes! It is possible. We can supply.' I said.

'How can you? Do you have your own company in Japan?'

'Suppose, we have our own company there.'

'All right! We will manage to give you the list of goods that we want you to supply us.'

'And how about Germany? Do you have trade relations with that country, too?'

'What kinds of goods?'

'For chemical supplies.'

'All right! we can manage that kind of supply also. 'I said, and there was a tremendous debate going on within myself. One voice within me said - 'Are we going to get business, really?' And I felt happiness in some corner of my heart. On the other hand, such big business propositions were put before us which we had never thought in our life before or which were impossible for us even to think about them for us. So I was also frightened by the propositions we were discussing in the talk. Another voice within me says - 'it is business, nothing is impossible in the business.'

Gagan said in his language, 'Matters are getting serious. aren't they!'

I said, 'Don't worry! It is a business talk. Whether we will be successful or not, only future can tell it.'

The interpreter from the Chinese side was asking me to tell him about the conversation that we had held. I said, explaining to the interpreter, 'We are ready to do business with you. What we want to know are the volumes of the goods to be supplied.'

'Every item to be supplied will be of over ten million US dollars.'

'All right, we will agree to supply the items mentioned in the talk.'

'How much do you know regarding commissions?'

'Yes, we know as much as we should know.'

'What is the rate of the commission that you can agree upon in case we did the business with you?'

How much you want? - from five to ten per cent, O.K.?, I gave them the best rate. Because I thought - giving the best rate would bring a good result. As a rule, the higher the volume of trade, the less is the rate of commission. In the business of ten million US dollars the proper rate of commission is only two per cent. But the rate of commission - from five to ten dollars - is not proper. After I gave them the rate of commission - from five to ten per cent - I felt frightened within myself with the thoughts that they might take us as immature petty traders.

Now they were talking in their language. I was worrying whether they were talking about my immaturity and mistakes. So I watched and tried to read the faces of both the men. Gagan also waited silently for the outcome of the conversation the two men were holding in their own language. I am holding a cup of tea in my hand, but not sipping the tea only waiting for the outcome of their conversation. I slowly started sipping my tea.

This time Sir Chen-Guo-Qing was telling the interpreter something important. He was a bit-fat, and dressed in grey Mao suit, and his coat was a tight-fit. As he was half-bald, his face looked broad and bright. He spoke slowly, but his eyes rolled fast. It showed that he was a clever man.

The interpreter slowly said, 'Sir Chen-Guo-Qing has accepted your proposition, and ten per cent commission is O.K. for him. But he asks five more per cent for the authorities in Beijing. So you are asked to quote the rates with fifteen per cent commission on them.'

Finally, it was a great relief for me. My proposition was accepted. But the fifteen per cent commission on any given rates of quotation may be thought to be overshot in the world market. However, if the buyer wants to buy things at any rate, there should have been no objection at all. I told Gagan in my language about their down-going moral standard and values. Gagan also agreed with me and said, 'we had to gather information and we gathered it. That's enough!'

In the meantime, the interpreter asked me to tell him about the opinion of Sir Gagan.

'He accepts your propositions,' I said.

'Has he agreed upon fifteen per cent commission?

'All right! We will manage the deal. But the rates will go a bit higher.'

'O.K. we will increase ten per cent on the rates.'

They did not seem to be concerned with rates. They all appeared to be accomplices in the game.

Now I felt myself hopeful on getting the business. If we got the business, how should we manage to carry out such big business deals? I was worrying about the big volumes of the business.

'Can you go to Beijing immediately?'

'We have to go to Tianzin first. Then we can go to Beijing.'

'Beijing is not far from Tianzin. It only takes about three hours from Tianzin to Beijing by train.'

'O.K.! Tell us when shall we reach Beijing? If you can, you give us the address also. So that we can contact you in the address in Beijing.'

'We don't have business to go to Beijing. If we go to Beijing, we go only in the connection of the business deals we are talking about here. So give us your addresses, we will come to contact you ourselves.'

They gave the address of Beijing with the name of the man in Beijing and his telephone number. The interpreter gave the address in writing. We told them that we would reach Beijing after three days and contact the man in Beijing on the fourth day.

Upon my asking as what could be the goods that we should be supplying them, the interpreter said, 'The goods that you would be supplying can be such as refrigerators, air conditioners, washing machines, television sets, video deck, computers and different kitchen equipments- and all should be made in Japan.'

'You said, the volume of each of these goods should amount to over ten million US dollars?'

'Yes!'

Provided we could carry out these business deals, we would be making fortunes! I was happy upon the talks of the business deals. Gagan was also happy about it, too.

Our business deals were almost settled. They were giving us business. And we were carrying it out. How could there be any doubt about our doing

business with them? Upon our asking on the final settlement of the business deals, they said the final settlement was to be reached in Beijing as the final authority resided there. So we had to go to Beijing to have the final settlement of the business deals which we had finalized the first phase here.

Our program was only to visit Tianzing, but now we were to Beijing also, as we could not miss such opportunities of big business deals. Gagan and me both decided to go to Beijing and have the business deals finally settled and promote our business relations with China.

According to Sir Chen-Guo-Qing, if the business could be carried out, it would not only be worth millions of dollars but billions. Even if only two per cent could be made in such business deals, fortunes would be pouring down upon the poor citizens of Nepal like us.

Preparing to see off, the interpreter said, 'Sir Chen-Guo-Qing is very happy meeting you and having a talk on the business deal. And he hopes, the business deals between our two parties will surely be fruitful and the trade relations between us a bright future.'

I said the same on behalf of Gagan, 'Sir Gagan also believes that the business deals that will be carried out in future will be beneficial for both the parties.'

All of us got up from our seats. Sir Chen-Guo-Qing first shook hands with Gagan then with me. Similarly, we shook hands with the interpreter and got out of the room. The interpreter came to see us off.

Our taxi waiting outside moved toward us in front of the door of the bungalow. The interpreter opened the door of the car and gestured us to get inside with the expression 'Please!'. We got inside the car and the interpreter closed the door. Our car moved forward while the hands of the interpreter moved in the farewell waving.

No sooner had we got outside the gate than Li-Shautong asked, 'How was the meeting?'

'Very good!'

'Did you have business?'

'Not finalised yet. However, the first phase of the business deal has been prepared. But we have to go to Beijing.'

'It is good. Now you remain assured. Your purpose is fulfilled.'

'What do you mean?'

'The man who lives in Beijing is one of great leaders of the party. And he is a friend of Mr. Chen-Guo-Qing. And he is the final authority in such business deals.'

Li-Shautong told us more about Chen-Guo-Qing. Chen-Guo-Qing came of a noble family. And he was also a wealthy man. His father and grandfather were some of the big industrialists and traders of Shanghai. Though they were big industrialists and traders, they had cooperated with the communist party in its activities during the revolution. So the party also gave its cooperation to this noble family. Though his factories had been taken over by the state, there was no change in his noble status.

Upon asking how Li-Shautong came into contact with Chen-Guo-Qing, Li said, 'My father worked as a driver of Mr. Chen-Guo-Qing for thirty years. After thirty years' service as his a driver, Mr. Chen-Guo-Qing recommended my father's name to the party for posting my father to a government job. Now my parents are happy. My father is a powerful man in the city of Garmu in the Tchun-hai province. Thus we have good relations with Mr. Chen-Guo-Qing.'

We got more information about Chen-Guo-Qing from Li-Shautong. It was about evening now and so we decided to go to the hotel. The car moved towards the hotel. According to our program we had to leave for Tianzing next day. So we decided not to have much of outing this evening. We told Li-Shautong that we wanted to just walk around on foot, not by car. We also told him to come at 9 a.m. to go to the airport next morning. Telling him all about the program, we set Li-Shautong free.

Next day Li-Shautong arrived at the fixed time. We also had checked out at the reception of the hotel and were ready to leave for the airport. We got into the car and it moved towards the airport.

Li-Shautong expressed his willingness for taking our snap. Gagan and myself took snaps with Li-Shautong by turn. After settling the bill of the taxi with Li, I said, 'Thank you very much for all your kind help and cooperation that you have given us. If we succeed to have the business deals, we will have to make our visits to China very often. So we will meet you again. O.K. Thank you very much once more.'

'Sure! We will meet again! And you sure do business with Sir Chen-Guo-Qing. It will be beneficial for all of us,' said Li-Shautong in all his seriousness and sincerity as his counsel to us.

'Yes, very well! We will do our best.'

One must make money. To collect wealth means to collect power. Only a powerful man will have success in life. To have success in whatever field, is to make life meaningful. Li-Shautong seemed to have understood this philosophy of life pretty well. So he was not out to collect wealth whether by hard labor or an easy way. He was determined to make wealth any way. Li-Shautong learned English to come into contact with foreigners and develop

relations with them. He seemed to have a bright future. But how bright his future would be could not be definitely said at this moment.

We took a flight from Shanghai to Tianzin. Shanghai was moving away from us but its memories were welling up into our heart and mind.

Chapter 7

We wanted to thrash out the matter today that could not be taken care of in yesterday's meeting. For this very purpose, we were sitting here from 09 a.m. in the morning. It was now 11 a.m. We had no hope that the matter would be settled today also. Gagan and me both were getting fed up with their manner and we had decided not to have any more talk with them.

The matter was that four months ago we had made an agreement with this company to supply blankets during the Trade Fair in Guangzhou. But the company sent us a telex telling us that it could not supply the blankets. And to settle the matter through dialogue, we had come to Tianjin.

As the company had refused to favor the previous agreement, and we told them that L.C. could not be opened for a new agreement from our side, the trouble started.

A middle-aged woman named Zhang-Diang was the manager of the company with the staff of twenty five workers. All the staff members, we were told, were dissatisfied with the manager because of her rude manner.

Zhang-Diang, a short figure in Mao suit, with boy's cut hair, whose husband was a powerful military officer, did not think that other people also were important. Because of the manners and mentality of this lady manager, we were told, the company's financial position was going from bad to worse. This information was given to us by Wang-Ziadu who spoke English and was the assistant of Zhang-Diang.

The purpose of factories was to produce goods which could be sold only within the country. And the goods could not be exported or sold to foreign countries. Exporting could be carried out only with special arrangement under

the export and import department of the state, or by the companies that had license for export import business. Under such arrangement producers got little and the export import companies made fortunes by exploiting the producers.

As these companies had monopoly rights, they behaved in arbitrary ways. If a company behaved in arbitrary ways, it meant the manager behaved in that way. That is, it was the mental attitude of the manager. Moreover, to become the manager of a company was to be in the position of power. And only a person who had close relations with high authorities was put in the position of power. Thus most of such companies were operating under people who were neither businessmen, nor industrialists.

We were sitting on one side of the table, on the other side were Zhang-Diang and Wang-Ziadu. The hot tea that came every fifteen minutes, was stirring in the cups. We were also stirring inside because we were getting bored, and didn't feel like talking, because they did not understand our points even when we explained them repeatedly the same points over. Now we were wondering through whom we could make them understand our points and in what way.

Assistant Wang - Ziadu was on our side. But he could not go against his madam. He was admonished only yesterday by her. She had told him to play only the role of an interpreter in the forth coming talks. So Wang-Ziadu was playing only the interpreter today.

Yesterday evening Wang-Ziadu had given us some tips. According to him if the company supplied us the goods at the rates given in the agreement, the company could make twenty per cent profit, but the madam was refusing to do so.

According to the policy here, if a company bought blankets from the producers on local currency and exported the goods in terms of US dollars, the bank gave commission to the exporting company and the government gave incentive money. So the exporting company made lots of money though there was no uniformity in rates.

Upon asking Wang-Ziadu why Zhang-Diang refused to carry out the deal according to the agreement, he said in reply, 'She does not look into the matter seriously in the first place. She looks only on the surface. And she overlooks the fact that the company can make less profit but no loss if it carried out the deal according to the agreement reached. But she misunderstands and takes her stand to cancel the agreement. But later when she comes to understand the reality, it is too late for her ego to change her stand though the company would go into loss.'

If the company refused to carry out the deal according to the agreement, it would not only lose whatever profit it could make if it carried out the

deal, but, at the same time, it would lose its credibility with foreign traders like us by the manager's unbusinessman like behavior. And as a result the country's business also might suffer. But the important figure who stood behind the management of the company was oblivious to the reality. She knew only one thing and stood for only one thing that the rate should be increased. That's all.

If the manager or leader of a responsible company displayed her inability to run the company, how could we make her realize her responsibility? And it was not our business also to tell her whether her company was losing or gaining financially. So I said, addressing Zhang-Diang, 'Madam Zhang, it is all right. If you are determined to cancel the agreement, you can cancel it, and write the bank that you cannot supply the goods provided in the agreement, and the L.C. that we sent you will be returned to us by the bank.'

'O.K.!' Zhang accepted my negative proposition without any regret. This answer of Zhang clinched the issue, breaking the agreement into zero. It was regrettable to Wang-Ziadu. So he gestured me to remain calm and quiet. Then he began to counsel Zhang in their language. But Zhang refused to buzz from her stand. Wang-Ziadu now turned towards me and in the manner of discussing with me, he counselled that we should invite her to dinner. It might help scuttle the matter, because she was greedy.

We were their guests. They should have invited us for dinner. But now we were proposed to invite them. Gagan said in his language, 'It's all right! Chinese people are fond of eating. Let's feed them, see, if matters can get patched up!'

I also liked the proposition. Whether matters got patched up or not, we would give them the dinner. With this decision, I said, in polished English, to Zhang, 'Madam! So, with your decision, our collaboration has failed. It is all right! But if we failed today, tomorrow we might be successful. Tomorrow we are leaving for Beijing. So we would like to invite you to dinner tonight. Please accept our invitation.'

With a smile, she said, 'Are you leaving for Beijing? I am also going to Beijing tomorrow. How are you going? By train or by plane?'

'We think, it is better to go by train.'

'Have you got your tickets?'

'No, not yet.'

Zhang also had not bought her ticket yet. So Wang-Ziadu would buy tickets for all of us today. Following my mentioning of our visit to Beijing, some remarkable change seemed to have come to Zhang's manners. Or, maybe, she was just pleased to hear the name 'Beijing', because in Beijing lived her husband. Or, maybe, our invitation to dinner had pleased her. Now she was

asking us a multitude of questions, such as, 'Do you have business deal in Beijing also? How many days will you be in Beijing?' Where will you stay?'

We answered her questions in English and Wang-Ziadu translated into Chinese for her. She said that the trip to Beijing tomorrow would be pleasant. Regarding the program of the evening she said, through the interpreter that it was just the opposite because we were guests and they our hosts. Now it was the guests inviting the hosts while it had to be the other way round.

'Maybe you are right! But there is no difference. We are the same,' I said to make her feel easy and comfortable in the situation.

I don't know how much she understood. But some time later she accepted it but with the feeling of somewhat uneasiness. However, her facial expression indicated that she was not happy at the moment.

After agreeing to meet in the evening for dinner we moved towards the hotel. Thinking that our visit to Tianzin had been in vain, both Gagan and me were unhappy. We now analyzed the situation. We talked about Zhang-Diang who had taken responsibility of such a big company, but had no ability to manage it. We also discussed the matters of policy regarding trade in this country.

Before it was evening Wang-Ziadu arrived at the hotel with the company car to take us for the evening. We were also ready for the program. While passing through the lobby of the hotel, Wang-Ziadu said, 'I hope, you will not mind for the program this evening. To invite Madam for dinner means to make your business a success. This lady is somewhat greedy. I wish your business to be a success.'

'We understand what the situation is.'

'It is not enough for us to think good only of the company, we must also understand the mental state of the authorities. So you will excuse me,' said Wang-Ziadu, blushing and exposing himself before us.

Reconciling him, I said, 'Don't worry, life is like this! It is just the same in our country also. We are businessmen. We understand.'

We went to the place of Zhang-Diang by the car of the company. Two more people came along with Zhang. So, including Zhang, three people came into the car. We moved them towards a newly built town. After strolling around for a while, when it was evening, we enter a huge building. The building was so huge that there were hundreds of eating places - from small fast food shops to big restaurants. We decided to let Madam Zhang herself to select the restaurant for the dinner party.

We went to a restaurant named Singapore. The room of the restaurant was so large that two hundred people could sit there.

We, six people, went to a table at one side of the restaurant and sat for the dinner. We also decided to let Madam Zhang herself order the food. Looking at the menu, she ordered the food, and for drink she ordered a bottle of Chinese Whisky 'Mauthai'.

Dishes started arriving at the table. The variety of dishes was impressive. They were so many. Among the dishes were also crab and different kinds of fish preparations, and many kinds of soup and food dishes. As the dishes were not to our taste, so we were not really eating but just giving them our company. That's all. It was because, there were such dishes also that we could not eat them at all.

At the end of the dinner came the bill which shocked Gagan. The bill was for 950.00 yuans. I also looked at the bill. I couldn't make it out, because it was in Chinese. I gave it to Wang-Ziadu to check it. After checking, he said, 'It is O.K.'

Now the bill was in the hand of Gagan. He was nervous. He took out all the money from his pockets, even then it could not make up 950.00 yuans. Gagan said to me surreptitiously, 'I didn't think we would need so much money today. Now what to do?'

As we were the hosts, there was no alternative. Gagan had only six hundred yuans about him. Now we went to the counter of the restaurant and settled the bill giving hundred dollars at the official rate. So having solved the problem anyhow we got out of the restaurant.

Spending such a big amount of money in one evening made Gagan very unhappy. So he said, complaining in his own language in a satirical manner, 'The madam has such a large stomach that she can devour four months' salary at one sitting!'

'It is like this here. Never mind!' I said, giving consolation to Gagan. The car of the company dropped us at our hotel. Taking leave of madam Zhang-Diang, I said, 'Thank you very much for accepting our invitation for the dinner. We will see again tomorrow.'

She expressed formally, 'I also thank you very much for giving us such a nice dinner. We will see tomorrow again. Thank you once more!'

Next day three people, including Wang-Ziadu came to the railway station to see us off. Wang-Ziadu said to me, 'I think your problem will be solved positively. After three days when Madam Zhang-Diang will return from Beijing, she may take positive decision on the issue. I feel so.'

'If the problem would be solved positively, we will appreciate it very much,' I said in reply.

Our train started. Wang-Ziadu waved 'Good-bye!' In response we three also waved 'Good-bye!' to them. With the speed of the train we moved away from Wang-Ziadu.

Because of the language difficulty, we could not talk, however we could use the universal language. How much she understood and how much we understood depended upon our capacity of understanding.

I had a nice pen. I gave it to Madam Zhang as a present. She accepted it with 'Se-Se!' (Thank you). Then her eyes fell on the Gagan's wrist-watch. It was a nice watch. She asked to have a look at it. Gagan took off the watch and handed it to Madam Zhang. She looked at it this way and that way. She liked it and expressed her liking in her own language which we did not understand.

Whether we understood her or not, we had to follow her in her actions and gestures. When Gagan used the term 'O.K.?' (meaning whether she liked the watch) Madam Zhang put the watch into her bag with the same expression 'Se-Se!'. Gagan could say nothing. He was simply dumb-founded. And I could say nothing myself. We were paying the penalty for our linguistic ignorance. Now we were just sitting silent and shocked.

Our train arrived at Peching-Hochang, the large railway station of Beijing. On the sideline of the track, another train had arrived. Madam Zhang-Diang was with us till the moment we were getting out of the train. But within a while she disappeared! As she was a short person, she got lost in the crowd. There was no question of calling out her name to find her out. So we had to part our ways with Madam Zhang-Diang without any etiquette and formality.

The crowd was moving into the underground like a river flood. We also joined the human flood into the underground. We didn't know where to go, and how to go. As all the signboards were written in Chinese, we felt as if we were blind. As we couldn't speak the language of the land, we felt as if we were dumb. Some-how we happened to come to a taxi stand. Taxi drivers knew that foreigners stayed only at hotels. So we were taken to Hotel Kochi Fantang or in English 'Hotel International'.

We made a telephone call to the address in Beijing with reference to our meeting in Shanghai. Fortunately we met the same man on the line who was the interpreter in the meeting in Shanghai. I came to know his name to be Shang-Yo-Pen. He mentioned it while we were talking on the phone. He said he would be coming to meet us at Kochi Fantang and have break-fast with us. As evening was approaching, we decided not to go anywhere.

Next morning right at 80'clock, Shang-Yo-Pen called us from the hotel lobby. We immediately came down to the lobby.

It took us no time to recognize Shang-Yo-Pen as he was a known face. We decided to take our breakfast known as 'continental breakfast' according to our prearrangement. In the restaurant we three sat in a triangle form around the table. We three expressed our happiness over our meeting again.

In the process of conversation, Gagan said, addressing Shang-Yo-Pen, 'When did you arrive Beijing?'

'I came by yesterday's flight,' said Shang-Yo-Pen. 'You also arrived on time. I was thinking you would be arriving only today,' said Shang-Yo-Pen in one breath, and continued further, 'Wasn't it difficult for you to come to the hotel?'

'It wasn't,' said Gagan in reply.

When the order-taker arrived at the table, Gagan himself ordered for the breakfast. Upon asking what he liked to eat, Shang-Yo-Pen agreed to eat whatever we wanted like jam, toast, egg-sandwich and coffee. Gagan ordered the same.

I inquired about Sir Chen-Guo-Qing's health with Shang-Yo-Pen. He said, 'Sir Chen-Guo-Qing is all right!' He further went on, 'Sir Chen-Guo-Qing is very much impressed by you. And he has instructed me to return to Shanghai only after making the business deals fruitful by any means.'

As we were meeting Shang-Yo-Pen second time, he was now more open than he was previously.

Gagan, showing his weaknesses, said, 'Mr. Pen! Is it possible for us to have the business?'

'Why not? Businessmen need business and business also needs businessmen. So business can be carried out,' I said to clear the doubt nagging Gagan.

'You are right,' said Shang-Yo-Pen, supporting me, 'There is no reason why this business cannot be carried out.'

After sometime, Shang-Yo-Pen said slowly, in a way of request, 'If the business is successful, I hope you will take care of me.'

'We have to make the business successful with your help, how can we forget to take care of you? Now we are friends. And we will remain friends in future,' I said emphatically.

Hearing me he, I guess, appeared happy. He also appeared to be more open in his facial expression. He said in a subdued voice, 'The business that you are now negotiating is just a petty affair. If this deal is settled and carried out, I can help you in very big deals!'

'What kind of big deals?' said Gagan with curiosity.

'Indeed, very big deals!'

'How big?' asked Gagan again.

'At Gagan's strange question, Shang-Yo-Pen began, 'Recently our government has given permission to two Air-Service companies to operate Air Services. These two Air Service Companies are going to purchase at least ten airplanes from the Boeing Company. For this purpose, arrangement for the required foreign currency has also been made. And the important thing is - Sir Chen-Guo-Qing bears strong influence on the companies that have got the permission to purchase the planes.'

Hearing Shang-Yo-Pen I was nonplused. Gagan was just dumb-founded. I began to swing on the shock-waves of both belief and disbelief. One Boeing airplane cost about forty million US dollars. And with the Americans the question of commission was negotiable. This was a huge business deal, but the question was how to get it. I was also getting nervous. And my mind was just reeling without thinking of any idea - possible or impossible. Gagan, though a businessman himself could say nothing, nor think of anything.

With a view to extracting more information from Shang-yo-pen I said, 'Sir Chen-Guo-Qing, if I remember right, didn't mention it when we were holding our talks in Shanghai. Did he?'

'I am now your friend. I am just giving you this information. Sir Chen-Guo-Qing wants this business deal to be carried out with an American party, and the talk is being initiated through a Chinese in Hong-Kong,' said Shang-Yo-Pen. And we readily realized that Shang-Yo-Pen was only operating upon the big deals, making their secrets bare before us.

Shang-Yo-Pen was trying to develop a closer relation with us. As we were foreigners, they didn't have to worry about being exposed in their own society and so he was making their secrets bare before us.

Moreover, Sir Chen-Guo-Qing had sent Shang-Yo-Pen to help us. Therefore, he was telling us even the deep secrets of the business deals of his country.

Breakfast arrived at the table. I asked Shang-Yo-Pen about the program of the day. Shang-Yo-Pen said, 'At three in the afternoon we have to go to the place where we are supposed to go, remember? Until then you make a program of sight-seeing in the city. I am free too.'

'Let's go around the city just for some time. It is already 9a.m.', I suggested, 'and it won't take long for three O'clock.'

'O.K.! Where to go first?' said Pen.

'How about Tian-Mein Square?' said Gagan.

'Oh! Tian-Mein? All right,' supported Shàng-Yo- Pen.

We got out of the hotel and took a taxi. And soon we started rolling upon the open, broad and beautiful Beijing streets. Clean roads with tree-lines on both sides and flower-beds set beautifully in between them and up-to-date new model cars were running on them. At different points in the city new buildings were going up. The Traffic Control System was automatic. Thus, it seemed, Beijing could match any big, modern city of the western world.

We arrived at the famous Tian-Mein Square. It is a large square which, perhaps, is the main attraction of the Great Hall. We left the taxi at one corner of the square and started walking. The square was so large that you didn't see any tall buildings around it, and it took about fifteen minutes to walk from one corner of the square to the other.

There was a single piece of stone displaying the history and the glimpse of events of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in engravings. And the large oil painting of Chairman Mao hung in front of the Great Wall was the central point of Tian-Mein Square.

Beijing is the central point of China, and Tian-Mein Square is the central attraction of Beijing. Right from here Chairman Mao had proclaimed China as a Peoples' Republic in 1949 A.D. Since that time Tian-Mein Square has become world famous.

After visiting the museum and taking a view of Mao's dead body, we moved towards 'Pithus', the white pagoda, a Buddhist Stupa, which was built by the famous Nepalese artist, Araniko. This stupa is built in Nepalese style and whitewashed with lime. The settlement around this stupa stands as an example of the old settlements of China.

Then we moved to Pi-Hie, that is, the Winter Palace. There is a large lake and around it are many temples and houses built in Chinese style covering a large area. Here we saw one more stupa in Nepalese style. When we made inquiry about the stupa, we were told, it was built by the first and foremost disciple of Araniko. At one side of the lake, boating was also allowed. But in the most part of the lake, boating was not allowed, because, we were told, the other side of the lake was the residential area of the high authorities of the state.

From there we went to Ich-Yuwan, that is, the Rainy Season Palace, which was twenty kilometers away. There was a lake here too and around the lake were temples and houses built in Chinese style. We were told that the lake froze and turned into a white hard ground during the winter season.

After making rounds of the palaces of the ancient kings of China, we went to Wang-Fuching, the main market of Beijing. The place was very crowded. It was difficult even to pass by the footpaths. Wherever you looked,

you saw only crowds. According to the program, we had to eat our lunch here. So while we were going around, we were also looking for a restaurant where we could eat our lunch. Whichever restaurants we came across along the way were all jam-packed.

Finally we went to a restaurant where they served the food of South-Western China, that is, of Sichuan Province. Some time earlier, Shang-Yo-Pen had asked us whether we liked spicy food. In reply, we had said that it was all right with us. So Shang-Yo-Pen chose this restaurant. All the dishes that arrived at the table were very spicy and hot. As we were hungry we ate some. However, we didn't know that in China food items were different in every community and province. The dishes were so hot, so pungent, that we could not swallow them. We, however, ate some by force to subdue hunger. But Shang-Yo-Pen ate to his heart's fill, because he was habituated to this kind of food. After lunch we moved towards the obviously place where we had our appointment, as already it was now going to be 03 p.m.

Our car stopped in front of a huge palatial building built in English style. We got out of the car and climbed the steps leading to the palace. The door of the palace was twelve feet high from the ground level. Entering the door we came into the hall. The ceiling of the hall was high. We went upstairs by the staircase placed in one of the corners of the hall.

There were security guards with guns at different points in the palace. The walks in the palace were covered with imported carpets. Lighting was managed in such a way that one could not make any difference between day and night inside the building. This was what I felt myself. How so much light could be managed inside the closed palace, I didn't have time to figure that out.

Shang-Yo-Pen stopped before a door. We also stopped. Taking us into the room, he told us to sit on the nearby sofa and got out of the room. He came back after about ten minutes and said, 'Excuse me! Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin is now busy in an emergency meeting. He has no time until evening.'

We just listened to him. We could say nothing. Gagan and me just looked at each other and said nothing. We had just come to meet someone. And moreover, we were foreigners. So we could say nothing. When we showed no reaction, Shang-Yo-Pen said again, 'You sit here for a while, I come back with a decision.' He went out of the room again.

Gagan said in his language, 'What kind of a man must be this Mr. Tang-Shiao Tchin? A responsible authority of such a great country, and such a powerful man.'

I did not make any comment on his opinion, although I was also thinking in the same way. He went on vent to his feelings, but I paid no attention to him. In the meantime a trolley with tea rolled passed into the room and a girl

put tea cups before us and poured tea into them. Now we were engaged in sipping tea. After about fifteen minutes Shang-Yo-Pen came back and said, 'Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin has expressed his intention to meet you at his house, and he has also invited you for lunch.'

To get a clear information from him, I said, 'Oh! he has no time now?'

'Yes! He is a high ranking officer. Today suddenly he had to attend a meeting. It does not matter. It is better to meet him at his house. It gives a chance to become more familiar and make friends.' said Shang-Yo-Pen, pressing his opinion before us.

'Now what shall we do? We have enough time to kill,' said Gagan.

'Well! Let's go sightseeing. I will take you to the temple of Heaven.'

'Where is this temple of Heaven?'

'Just here in Beijing. It is not very far.'

We got out of the palace and took a taxi. Within a short while we arrived at the place where the temple of Heaven stood. Leaving the taxi behind, we walked into the garden of the temple of Heaven, and through the garden we moved forward until we reached a long flight of steps. Climbing the steps, finally we entered the compound of the temple. In the middle of the compound ground, paved with the stone slabs, was a huge temple called 'the temple of Heaven'.

The architecture of the temple is round-shaped. It has two-tier roofs. In the middle of the top roof is placed a pinnacle. The pinnacle is short and round in shape and design. And the temple looks like made in the Nepalese pagoda style. And it is a very beautiful temple indeed.

One strange thing about the temple is that if a person placed his mouth close to the wall and talked and another person placed his ear close to the wall at the other end of the compound wall and listened, it is like the telephonic communication. This is really strange. And it is said that the temple is built of a single tree which is difficult to believe.

As we were at a higher place overlooking the city of Beijing, we were enjoying the scenic views of the city very well from here. It was now one hour already, but we did not realize it. Time passed so soon. We knew it only when Gagan told us. Addressing Shang-Yo-Pen, I said, 'Mr. Pen, we are here one hour already. But we did not feel so. How soon time has passed!'

Laughing, he said, 'You are now in Heaven! So you are not time-bound. You are liberated here.'

Yes, we really felt we were in Heaven. Our experience of joy and peace was so pure and serene. And the Chinese people believe that they go to

Heaven or Hell after death. This information was given to us by Shang-Yo-Pen. When I wanted to know his own opinion, he said, 'This is an old idea belonging to old Chinese culture and religion. But I am grown up in the new Chinese culture. So I am not so much given to entertain this kind of belief.'

'What do you mean by new culture?' said Gagan, asking for explanation of the concept.

'This is our national culture. The new people's culture is the real national culture. This is peoples' revolt against the authorities and defenders of the traditional feudal culture. And at the same time, it stands for the national dignity and liberty and propagates the ideas that all the Chinese people should get united.'

'So you mean, the old cultural values and traditions have disappeared from the Chinese society? What is your analysis?' I said, trying to know Shang-Yo-Pen's personal views.

My question sent him into deep thinking. Thus he was compelled to tell the truth. He said, 'One thing has to be destroyed to create another thing'. According to this theory of the Chinese Neo-proletarianism, the Cultural Revolution was started. But this Revolution was halted when the ruling authorities realized that it was not as easy to destroy an age-old cultural system as the political system. Now I feel that the ancient Chinese culture and its values are being reinstated in the Chinese society. This is how I feel.'

'So you think that the old Chinese culture can be re-established in the new Chinese proletarian society? Is this how you feel now?' I said, to get his opinion further clarified.

'Actually speaking, the cultural revolution, which was launched under the banner of Neo-Proletarianism, failed to uproot the established old Chinese culture. It has only weakened its effects. It has not been destroyed. So one can say there is no question of re-establishing the old culture of China,' said Shang-Yo-Pen, speaking out his true faith underlying the depth of his mind.

'I think, there is a contradiction in your statement,' said Gagan, 'In your first statement you said that you really don't believe in the old Chinese culture. And in your second statement you say that the old Chinese cultural values and traditions have not been destroyed. They are still being maintained. Don't you think there is a contradiction?'

'Yes! when the Cultural Revolution was going on, I was then a student of a school. I had my basic education there. When I later started understanding things, I began to study ancient Chinese history and understand the society by close observation. Then I began to understand that the real image of China is

reflected in its ancient culture. I am not yet so much attracted by religion. But with my family heritage, I may also be attracted by religion in future. Who knows,' said Shang-Yo-Pen, making himself mentally bare before us.

We then thought to get out of the temple compound. It was late by now. So we decided to go to the house of Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin straight. We took a taxi which moved through the city into the countryside. There was no city - glamour there, nor the shops and crowds. Only clean and similar looking beautiful houses were there. Our taxi stopped before the gate of a house.

Shang-Yo-Pen left us at the gate and went inside to the next gate and made inquiry with the security guards, then contacted the bungalow by phone. After a while, he came and said, 'Let's go in. Let the taxi go.'

We let the taxi go, and moved inside. While going inside, he said, 'Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin is coming. He will be here by about ten minutes. We will go inside and wait for him.'

Hearing him said, I was bored and frustrated, thinking, this time also, perhaps, we would not meet the man. But when we entered the camp, my boredom and frustration disappeared by the attraction of the scenery of the garden, the green lawn like a green carpet, and a variety of flowers blooming in their full beauty. I didn't feel myself in hurry to leave this scenery. Drawing Gagan's attention, I said, 'How beautiful!'

'Yes! it is beautiful! But you should also think that how many hands must have worked to make it beautiful!,' said Gagan. He was looking at it from different angle which I had overlooked.

In the meantime, a gentleman came out and welcomed us with 'Nihan! Whanin!' We shook hands with him. And he escorted us into the sitting room where we took our seats on a long sofa. The sitting room was decorated in half Chinese and half European style. There were many things depicting Chinese culture, but the style of display was European.

'Oh! see! how many things are on display here!' said Gagan in amazement!

'Oh! Yes! But all these things must have come here as gifts. They have a custom here to give and take gifts,' I explained to Gagan what I had already understood and there is nothing to be surprised of.

A young girl entered the room with tea. She put two cups in front of us and poured tea into them. Gagan thanked her with a smile. When she went out only we two were left in the room.

We then discussed about the man who enjoyed the room. Making different kinds of guess-works and logic, Gagan said, 'This house-owner,

Mr. Tang-Shiao-Tchin, must be a luxury-loving person. Maybe, he comes of a luxury-loving noble family.'

'No one can say who he is, because during the cultural revolution people of the cities were sent to the villages, and the village were brought to the cities and it was called "interchange", so this person may be from a village or from a city. We will know it only when we meet him,' I said.

Clarifying his view, Gagan said, 'My guess is on the basis of this decoration. Look at this bungalow, and this decoration, is there any shortcoming compared to that of European aristocracy?'

'I endorse your guess.' No sooner had I said it than Shang-Yo-Pen entered the room and said, 'Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin has arrived. He is in the garden. He is coming here very soon.'

We put ourselves on the alert! We wiped our faces with hankies and adjusted our neckties. In this affair Gagan was ahead of me. While we were still picking and pruning ourselves, three persons entered the sitting room. Among the three were Shang-Yo-Pen, the gentleman who had escorted us into the sitting room and a middle-aged man in Mao suit who looked very simple.

We were wondering at the man who entered the sitting room and was moving towards us whether that was the man to meet whom we had come over such a long distance.

When they were quite close to us, Shang-Yo-Pen, introducing the gentleman to us, said, 'Here is Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin.'

We both shook hands with Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin while Shang-Yo-Pen introduced us to him. He was with a smiling face, but his hands were rough indicating that he belonged to laborers' class.

Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin sat on the sofa in front of us. Shang-Yo-Pen sat beside him. Tea cups were placed before them also filled with tea. Our cups were filled too. Now we began our formal talks.

Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin said through the interpreter that he was very sorry for not being able to meet us in his office and the inconvenience caused by it. He also mentioned the telephonic talk with Sir Chen-Guo-Qing about us and Mr. Shang-Yo-Pen whom Sir Chen-Guo-Qing had sent to Beijing to help us.

As both sides had to talk through the interpreter, the talk went very slowly.

'What goods do you deal in?'

'All the goods that you need, we can supply.'

'You mean, all the goods from Japan, Europe and America?'

'Yes! we can.'

'At this time we need fertilizer in a large quantity.'

'How much is your requirement?'

'This time we have decided to buy the quantity that may cost us around one billion US dollars.'

'I did not find courage to say 'Yes' or 'no.' Gagan also could say nothing. I just kept nodding, giving them the signs that I understood them. As I didn't know which countries in the world produced fertilizer and where it could be purchased for better price, so I thought I should say nothing definitely.

'Can you supply the fertilizer we want?'

This question that came to me through the interpreter, put me in a fix.

Gagan said quickly, 'Yes, we can, why not?'

'Where do you supply it from?'

Now Gagan took over and started talking in reply to questions. I remained silent.

In the meantime, we were informed that dinner was ready. We went into the dining room attached to the sitting room. About ten people could sit around the round-shaped dining table. A middle-aged lady also joined us in the dining room. She was the wife of Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin. There were altogether five people at the table for the dinner. There were two young girls attending on our table. The process of putting and arranging towels, napkins, crockery and cutlery began. Small glasses for drinks and chopsticks were also placed before us.

After a while, two young men in uniform started serving food. The bearer himself put a food item in to our plates at first then placed the dish at the center of the table. A young girl poured whisky into the small glasses before us. Now Tang-Shiao-Tchin proposing toast, said in his language, 'Now I welcome you here and wish you success in your business endeavors!' We also fulfilled the required formality.

Courses of the dinner continued. Another bearer came in with a different dish, he also did the same, putting a piece of food in our plates and placed the dish in the middle of the table. This process continued. It meant, if we liked any food we had to help ourselves, if we didn't, leave it. Gagan and I ate the pieces put in our plates. And the other three persons were also doing the same as we did. And we were not taking anything from the dishes placed at the center of the table. For us, particularly, the dishes were not to our taste and liking that had so far came to the table.

Tang-Shiao-Tchin lifted his glass and said, 'May our friendship live long!'

We also did the same acting and repeated the process. Shang-Yo-Pen was very carefully interpreting our dialogue. Not only that, he also asked at times how we liked the food. Likewise, we also did not forget to say, 'The food is good and tasteful and we like it very much.'

Another young girl was attending on our table. Her duty was to change our plates. Dishes were continuing to arrive, drinks were going on, napkins were changed now and then, and the dinner table was kept clean. And our act of eating was also going on. About thirty dishes came to the table. We only tasted, actually did not eat the dinner. We had had enough.

How much to eat? How much were we supposed to eat? We had taken just a little out of every dish. All the dishes were gone back. A question arose in my mind whether those dishes were eaten or thrown away? I didn't find any answer to it. If they were thrown away, 'Why this wastage of the wealth of the state?'

I guessed, the salary of Tang-Shiao-Tchin was not more than five hundred yuans per month. But he had given us so expensive a dinner. If we were to calculate on the basis of the bill that we paid in one of the restaurants in Tianzin, it might come to about five thousand yuans.

We went back to the sitting room. A program of sight-seeing of the Great Wall had been fixed for the next day. Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin would send us a car for the trip. Now it was going to be evening. Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin said something in the way to see us off in his own language.

He said he would send us a car for the sightseeing trip next morning at 9 a.m. Regarding business Shang-Yo-Pen would arrange everything. Our visit should continue. Our business deals must be a success. We were very glad to hear him express his goodwill towards us in such a manner.

Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin came outside the bungalow to see us off. Expressing his good-will and happiness, he said, 'Our short meeting has been a great pleasure for me. We will meet again. Good-Night!'

In response we said the same thing and we took leave of Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin and left for the hotel by his car.

Next day at 9 a.m. we were ready for the sight-seeing trip of the Great Wall. The car arrived on right time. Shang-Yo-Pen gave us a phone-call. We hurried down-stairs and after shaking hands with Shang-Yo-Pen, we started for the Great Wall.

Passing through the plains of Beijing, the car started ascending the hills. It took about two hours to reach the tourist center of the Great Wall called

'Pataling.' It is said to be about seventy-five kilometers from Beijing. We were so greatly surprised when we saw the wall. Gagan said, 'Oh! What a wonder! It must be the greatest of the wonders of the world!'

We went up the wall. Reaching the top of the wall, I was blurting out my feeling of wonder, 'Oh! this is why it could have been seen even from the outer space! Yes, It is true!'

The height of the wall is from thirty to sixty feet and its breadth is from fifteen to thirty feet. The wall begins from Gansu Province of North-Western China to Guang-Chau of Shanghai and it is about four thousand kilometer long. Construction of this wall was started by the king of the Tchin dynasty, named Shau-Wang. And we were told by Shang-Yo-Pen that it took four hundred years to complete the building of the wall.

One can see the wall running east-west through the hills as far as one's eye-sight can go. When one observes the bricks with which the wall has been built, one cannot but wonder on the ancient Chinese technology and the modern scientists and architects cannot even guess how it could have been done. The bricks have the strength of rocks and look like rocks. What must have been the technology with which they made these bricks, was out of our imagination.

This Wall was built by the emperors of Tchin dynasty to geographically separate and keep China aloof from Mongolia and Russia. But now it looks as if the wall were keeping China aloof from the rest of the world. Sitting on the wall, I kept contemplating, looking towards the North, 'I think the wishes and determinations of the ancient Chinese emperors have now been fulfilled by the neo-proletarianism!'

When one observes this matchless wall beyond our imagination, one cannot remain without appreciating the hands which built this wall from the bottom of one's heart. And the new China of tomorrow will also be built with the same kind of perseverance - such thoughts were arising in my mind without my conscious efforts.

We walked some distance on the wall, sat down for a while, and came back. It was now time for lunch. After lunch, we left for another tourist center.

After about one hour's drive, we arrived near Shasangling. On the way to this region, we saw figures of elephant, horse, camel and man built out of single pieces of rocks and set in lines on the sides of the road as if they were standing there to welcome us. The height of the figures was about fifteen feet and they presented a glimpse of ancient China.

We arrived at Shasangling. It covered a wide area. There were domes and temples here and there. Folk-lore has it that the kings and emperors of ancient China are still taking their rest in these domes and temples. Evening

was approaching while we were still on our sightseeing and strolling around. We started towards our hotel. There were still so many things to see, however we could not continue our stay in Beijing for that matter. According to our schedule, we were leaving Beijing next day at 1 p.m. for our home-land.

Dropping at the hotel, Shang-Yo-Pen said, 'Well! Tomorrow right at 10 a.m. you be ready. I will come with the car and take you to the airport.'

Thanking him for the full day's sightseeing, I said, 'Many thanks! Tomorrow we are troubling you again. You will excuse us.'

'Good-night!' he said and left. We waved him with the expression of 'Good-night!'

Next day he arrived on time. We were also ready with our luggage packed already. This time Shang-Yo-Pen came into our hotel room. As we had some time, we talked about business.

He said, 'Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin has been very happy with you. He thinks he would give you all the business that is to be carried out in this region of the world.'

'This is a welcome news. Thank you very much for this,' said Gagan in response.

'How to start the business?' I said, expressing my uncasiness.

'Oh! This you have to think for yourself. You are businessman,' said Shang-Yo-Pen.

'No, I mean, if there is any suggestion from Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin about it,' I said.

'Yes! Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin thinks if you have an office in Hong Kong or Singapore that is good. If you don't have, then in one of the two places you should set up an office'.

'What kind of office should it be?' said Gagan.

'Yes! Right! We need an office. Without office how can business be carried out? So Sir Tang-Shiao-Tchin's suggestion is right. We will do that,' I said.

The suggestion meant, when we set up an office in one of the places suggested, it facilitated them to explore what goods we could supply them, and after placing our quotations, they would take decision on our behalf and open L.C. and then we would supply them goods. This is a normal commercial rule.

I thought in my mind - if the business deals could have been settled, and carried out, it would be something great. But, I was actually feeling it to be something like a castle in the air, something afar to reach.

It was time to move. So we got out of the hotel room and drove towards the airport. The large airport of Beijing was filled with people. Shang-Yo-Pen brought our boarding cards.

Taking leave of Shang-Yo-Pen, I said, 'We thank you from the bottom of our heart for sculling our business deals. We will keep you in constant touch by telephone or telex. We are confident that we will make our business deals a success!' Shan-Yo-Pen also reciprocated the same. We took leave of one another waving our hands.

We were flying from Beijing to Hong Kong on our way home, but our mind was still attached to China. What to do? How to do? Whether we had forgotten our present? Questions such as these were arising in our mind while we were nearing our home-land.

Chapter 8

After crossing the Friendship Bridge we stepped on the soil of Tibet, an autonomous region of China. The jeep that was carrying Gagan and me was rolling towards Zhangmu. We had started from Kathmandu at 5 a.m. in the morning. Now it was 2 in the afternoon. We had to get through the immigration by 3.30 p.m., because it was 6 p.m. Beijing time. So the office might be closed by that time. We, therefore, were in a hurry. We were accompanied by Mr. Lakpa who was an inhabitant of Zhangmu. He was making all the arrangement for our journey to Lhasa.

Lakpa is a Nepalese Sherpa. His house is on this side of the Zhangmu mountain which is at Nepal. As his house is on the Zhangmu mountain, the Chinese government has given him a permit which facilitates him to travel freely across the border. So Lakpa has dual citizenship of Nepal as well as of China. Lakpa speaks Nepali quite well. So Gagan was asking him many questions about the town of Zhangmu. Lakpa was answering the questions in detail.

I was very happy in my inner heart. Over many years I had a great wish to visit this place. But in those days it was not possible. The rules and regulations were not so tight as they were before. But it was not so easy even today. Tibet is still a closed country of China. No one can enter Tibet with a visa for China. To go to Tibet one is required to obtain a special permit. It took us four months to obtain this permit. And it was pretty difficult to get it. I have not yet understood why they have closed this region.

The trade routes of my forebearers were closed. I had read and heard many things about Tibet. But now I could see them with my own eyes. So I

was feeling myself very happy. I guess, Gagan was also feeling the same way as I did.

It took us quite a long time to reach Tibet, but we could see the Zhangmu town over the same distance as well as the Friendship Bridge as they were before. But, acatully, we were on the top of the mountain miles away from Zhangmu and the Friendship Bridge yet we could see them. And one felt dizzy to look at the houses and the traffic running on the roads down below. We steadily moved towards the North.

The road was narrow and rocky. Two vehicles up and down could not pass easily. Though the area was rocky, it was green with trees and vegetation. According to the traffic rules in China, one had to drive on the right. But we in Nepal drive on the left. As our driver did not know the rule, he nearly ran into a Chinese truck that was passing him. However, as both the vehicles were running slow, they did not meet with an accident.

Our vehicle moved on. When we crossed a turning, a batch of eight or nine soldiers came forward and stopped us. And they made us worried by their activities when some of them climbed on our vehicle, hanging on front-side doors. We stopped the vehicle, but said nothing. In the meantime, three or four soldiers carried an unconscious man towards our jeep and laid down the man on its back seat. Lakpa who was sitting on the back seat of the jeep made inquiries about the unconscious man in his broken Chinese.

The group had come to cut wood in the nearby forest in the morning after their morning tea. And one of them had fainted because of weakness. They were supposed to reach their barrack by 1 p.m., but as transport could not be available, they were late. And this, we were told, was the reason that they wanted to take a lift in our jeep.

These soldiers were, in age, from eighteen to nineteen years old. As recruits, they had to serve as border security guards at least for two years.

We saw a group of soldiers picking up small pieces of rock on the road. At this Lakpa said, 'The soldiers posted here keep the roads clean. That's why they fell the trees, do the digging and other field works themselves.

I realized at once that the roads which linked other neighboring countries were constructed from strategic points of view. So this road was also built with this very point of view. But the road was so poorly built that it could be made totally unusable by placing a fairly big rock in the middle with a small blast. I did not understand why this road which linked Nepal border was in such a poor condition, or built in such a poor way.

After a while, we arrived at a military camp. Lakpa told the soldiers that there was a hospital in the Zhangmu town. But, we were told, they could

not take the sick man to the hospital without their commander's permission. So the soldiers got out of the jeep here.

Lakpa said, 'Every year two or three men disappear from this camp. And such men are found dead in the nearby jungle or thrown into a pit. But we keep quiet because it is not our business to poke into the matter.'

Gagan said, 'you say, people disappear from here?'

'Yes! When they find the work unbearable some of them run away home and some of them commit suicide,' said experienced Lakpa.

According to Lakpa, they do not have a set of rules and regulations. Rules and regulations are in the whims of the commanders. If the commander is a gentle type of man, the sufferings of the soldiers will be less. If the commander is of whimsical type, the soldiers suffer very much.

We reached the Ramite Bazar where we rested for some time at the house of Lakpa and moved onward to Zhangmu town. After crossing a turning, we arrived at the entry gate of Zhangmu town.

Arriving at the Zhangmu town, we had to fill up a health declaration form. In this form was written 'Fruits, meats and other kinds of food stuff are prohibited to carry into the territory of China.' So we had to leave the fruits we had with us behind.

After this, they treated the vehicle. For this we paid Rs.70.00. A man with a spray tank on his back moved towards our jeep and sprayed insecticide over our jeep for about fifteen minutes.

Then we moved on to another office building where were the immigration police. On one counter we paid Rs.40.00 for the vehicle entering the Chinese territory. But the border police was dilly-dallying to allow us entry. Lakpa could not question them about it. He had already told us that he should not talk with the border police. If he argued with them, anytime the facility given to him might be stopped. Therefore, he had to behave as if he knew nothing. If he did so, the facility would continue.

We were not being allowed entry. We did not understand them and they did not understand us. We were here for hours. After such a long lingering a policeman approached us who could speak English. He said, 'If you want to go to Lhasa, you can go only by air, not by land from here.'

There was no one to listen to us. We had visa for China and Tibet, but they were not allowing us entry. We told them everything. But they posed as if they were deaf. After a long fruitless haggling, they closed their office at 3.40 p.m. and left. We also left for Ramite and stayed at the house of Lakpa.

There was only one route by air, it was Hong Kong- Tchengdu - Lhasa route. It was expensive and took too much time, too. There was no Kathmandu-Lhasa air service over the Himalayas. Yet, though they were so close, we are helpless. We began to worry as how to get to Lhasa. I felt like going back to Kathmandu.

Counselling us, Lakpa said, 'Today you stay here. Tomorrow they change. I will fix the matter with the new officials. Don't worry. And tomorrow morning we will go to Zhangmu. Is it O.K.?'

I did not react to Lakpa's proposition. I was worrying about the manner of these border policemen. Perhaps Gagan was feeling the same way, too.

'All right!', said both of us at once willy-nilly, because there was no alternative except what Lakpa has proposed. We were compelled to spend the night at the house of Lakpa at the Ramite hill.

Next morning Lakpa said, 'With the three hundred rupees you had given me yesterday I would buy some gifts and present to the man who would be on the duty today. So let's hurry up.'

We prepared ourselves hurriedly and arrived at the entry gate of Zhangmu. We came to know that we had to go through the same process of formalities over again that we had to go through yesterday -from paying money for the entry of the vehicle to treating the vehicle with insecticide. So we decided to send the vehicle back to Kathmandu and carried the luggage by ourselves up to Zhangmu.

In almost all the shops, they spoke Nepali and accepted Nepali currency. While going around the town, we did not feel that we were in a foreign land. However, when we saw the Chinese police and soldiers, then we realized that we were in the Chinese territory. There were both types of shops -state-run shops as well as private shops. While the state-run shops were large ones, the private shops were pretty small.

As we were passport-holders, we could not stay at smaller hotels or private houses. So we went to stay at the Zhangmu Fandae, the big hotel in Zhangmu. At the hotel, we managed to get a jeep also. We had thought that the jeep was a taxi. But it was not. It was an official jeep. We came to know this after our making payment of three hundred yuans per person, altogether six hundred yuans, to the driver of the jeep. There were two more passengers. So there were altogether five passengers. The driver was making one thousand yuans which it took one year for him to make out of government salary. This jeep, we came to know, was assigned to take the state -guests to Lhasa.

Next morning at 7.00 a.m. the jeep started ascending the steep road running up from Zhangmu. About 9.00 a.m. we arrived at Kuti called 'Nyalamu'. The town of Nyalamu, sandwiched between two mountains, is famous as a main gate to Lhasa from Nepal. Unconsciously I remembered the popular Nepali saying 'Going to Lhasa through Kuti.' I found it to be true. Now I was also going to Lhasa through Kuti.

Then our jeep started climbing the steep road running north-east from the town of Nyalamu. After hours of climbing, we reached an area of plain land. I told the driver to stop when the jeep stopped. We found the cold wind blowing outside. To see the Himalayas, I had to turn not towards the North, but towards the South. The peaks of the Himalayas were seen to be standing about on the parallel heights to where we were. I was feeling very happy to be on a large flat land on such a height.

'Oh! It is like Heaven!' I unconsciously blurted out.

'Oh! Yes! I feel the same. It is a paradise up here! Oh! What a joy it is to be here!' Exclaimed Gagan - excited and overjoyed.

There were no trees, no vegetation. Nor were any murmuring rivers and streams. A large cold desert land was spread out from where you could view the shining silver peaks of the Himalayan mountains. However, it was quite pleasant to charm our hearts.

I was just wondering whether it was so pleasant and charming to us alone, or so to Lakpa also who passed through here very often and whether the driver also felt the same way I inquired with Lakpa Sherpa to ascertain and in reply he said, 'It is joyful to be up here to me also, though I have to pass through here very often. And I feel like sitting here for a long time. I don't know why.'

'Maybe it is so pleasant because it is the top of the Himalayan region, the highest plateau in the world,' said Gagan making up an explanation for himself.

After about twenty minutes sitting at the place, we moved forward. From here the jeep started rolling downhill northward. We did not see any human habitation or settlement around.

When it was lunch time, the jeep stopped before a house. All of us went into the house. When I asked Lakpa about food, he said, 'You don't get food here to your liking. So you eat your own food.'

Gagan took out the biscuits from his bag. We had to be content with biscuits and hot water. We did not drink cold water. For Lakpa Sherpa, the driver and the other two Tibetans, there was management of the yak meat dishes. A huge price of yak meat which might be one-fourth of a whole yak

was single man could hardly carry. They hacked a piece out of the lump, weighing about three kilograms and cut the meat into small pieces and put them in small plates. And they put uncooked barley flour into a skin bag, poured hot water and started rubbing it with hands. Rubbing the skin bag about five minutes, they took out the dough of the barley flour out of the skin bag and making small balls put them in the plates with the meat.

With much interest we watched the four persons eating their lunch prepared of yak meat and barley flour with great relish. The landlady of the house catering and attending on them, put more meat and poured more hot water into the food stuff of the barley flour. The lady gave us more hot water. They were eating and at the same time cutting jokes in their own language. We did not understand their language, so we did not know what they were saying and why they were laughing, however, we had nothing else to do but join them unawares in their laughter. There was no window in this house. The interior of the house was covered with smock-shoots making it look black all around. Outside the door it was very sunny. But inside the house there was neither light nor air. They maintained the traditional belief that they should not allow light and air inside the house. So I was feeling this house, not to be a house, but a cave.

After lunch, we continued on our journey. The jeep ran through turnings, ups and downs, raising dust on the dusty roads. We saw sheep pastures along the way. The sheep appeared to be poking on the grassless ground with their snouts. They were not actually grazing because there was no grass on the ground. There were also herds of yaks grazing beside the sheep. For hours on we drove in this area, but saw no green vegetation anywhere.

At 3.00 p.m. we arrived in the Tingri Valley. I had heard a lot about the Tingri Valley from our fore-fathers. Folklore has it that when the people of Kathmandu fell out from their culture and religion, turning out to be selfish, corrupt and oppressive, such people were driven away from Kathmandu into the valley of Tingri and they took their shelter here. Such a folk-story had made me imagine a multitude of things. Now, I was here to see it with my own eyes and it was making me worried.

One could see some real villages around in the corners, sides and slopes of the valley. Perhaps they had only one crop of barley here, because the soil here was grey and sandy. So it might not be much fertile for crops. And not all the fields appeared to have been ploughed. And the human settlement appeared to be less compared to the expense of the territory.

The jeep stopped. The driver said something to Lakpa in his language. And Lakpa said, 'You can see Everest very well from here.'

We got out of the jeep. Yes, one can see the northern part of Everest very well from here. We came to know that the Everest Mountain was called 'Tchoma-Lama' by the Chinese. The Tibetans, however, called it Zhyam-Longma. I was much more interested to see the Tingri Valley going around it than the Everest Mountain. And a question popped in my mind, 'Why have the Nepalese made themselves so much related to the Tingri Valley?'

After sitting and resting for a while, we continued on our journey. The terrains looked the same, the settlements were the same for hours as we drove along. In a way it was somewhat boring and tedious. In small villages the houses were without roofs, but in the larger villages big Gumbas (Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries) could be seen.

We arrived at Sigarche by 12.0'clock in the night. We were placed in a big hotel, while others went to a small lodge to stay for the night.

Sigarche used to be the main trading center between India and Tibet before 1957. From here Yatung, from Yatung, Gangtok of Sikkim and Kalimpong were not very far. And the Panchen Lama, a Tibetan authority, who turned out to be a staunch supporter of the Chinese government, was a strong man in Beijing. Lakpa Sherpa told me in Sigarche.

We were tired. And it was late night. So we slept like babies. We awoke only once when it was already dawn. When we hurriedly prepared ourselves and went down to the hotel lobby, our friends were already waiting for us in the lobby. Upon my request, the jeep went around the city of Sigarche and then took to its usual course towards Lhasa.

Our jeep headed straight towards its destination, by running sometimes along the rivers, sometimes on the tops of hills, sometimes along the foot hills, sometime by the lakes. We saw more human settlements along the rivers than elsewhere. By experience and by inquiry we came to know that the most of the young people of the villages were illiterate.

The government had set up schools, but they were not enough, because there was only one school for seven or eight villages. And because of the difficult topographic conditions as well as the compulsory Chinese language and writing, which was not in accord with the Tcheten nature and temperament, ninety per cent of the Tibetan children remained illiterate.

Whatever is the place and position of Tibet in the world map, it has, politically, been an independent country. If one is to think on the geographical, natural, and social conditions and situations of this region, he will realize that it is still independent. We do not find any changes in the social and cultural traditions and norms here. Even today they want their first son to be a Lama, which means, they want to offer their first son to God, and they offer half of their earning to the Gumba (monastery). It was not a political state, but a

theocratic state. And it still survives after all the changes that this country has seen. It is proven here that cultural characteristics cannot at once go against the social customs and traditions.

I had an easy source of information. I came to know that Lakpa Sherpa had made it almost his profession to supply information. As Lakpa knew the Tibetan language, it made me easier to draw whatever information I wanted to from Lakpa Sherpa.

Talking, exchanging ideas, staying together at different places on the journey and making inquiries and getting information, we finally approached the city of Lhasa. Soon after our entry in the area of Lhasa, we saw the Potala Palace.

As Lhasa is situated on the highest plateau of the world it is called 'the roof of the world.' When we reached Lhasa, I was excited with joy. I felt happy and fully content within myself.

We were going westward and the light of the setting sun seemed to be on the parallel line with Lhasa, which was striking on the gold and silver of the Potala Palace, making them shine with their reflections. Though we were quite far away from the huge Potala Palace situated on top of a hill, yet it seemed to be quite near. We drove towards the Palace and came quite close to it. The evening was approaching. The majesty and magnificence of the Potala Palace with its gold and silver decorations shining in the golden light of the setting sun made the city of Lhasa look fantastically beautiful. The roof of the Potala Palace was painted white and red and its pinnacles were all gold-plated.

We arrived at the Hotel Lhasa (Lhasa Fante), making a round of the city of Lhasa. Gagan and me decided to stay at the Lhasa Fante, and Lakpa Sherpa went to stay with one of his friends. Actually it was not yet night, but, as people here had to follow the Beijing time, they had to take their dinner in the early evening. We also had our dinner in the early evening and proceeded towards our hotel rooms.

In the early morning, we saw a minibus standing in front of the hotel which took passengers around down-town Lhasa. Taxis were not available here. For going anywhere, you had to reserve a transport. So both of us boarded the minibus and got down at Chukla-Khan.

Chukla-Khan is the old part of Lhasa city. Here is situated the huge and beautiful Jhokhang Gumba which is the holiest shrine for the Tibetans. We also went near the Gumba. There were thousands of Tibetans. Many of them had come here over a long distance. They belonged to different communities and ethnic groups. We got ourselves lost in the crowd.

Hundreds of pilgrims were offering their prayers in front of the Gumba. They were offering their prayers in different ways. Some of them were doing up and down with their body, some of them making rounds of the Gumba and some of them prostrating flat on the ground.

In whatever different ways they could they were offering their prayers to Buddha. In the crowd I could see Lakpa Sherpa also. After some time, finishing with his prayer, Lakpa Sherpa came to us and said, 'I was thinking I would come to you after my prayer, but you have come yourselves here. I am glad.'

Lakpa Sherpa took us inside the Gumba, and describing the monument, he said, 'This Gumba was built by the ancient king, Tshrong-Chen Gampo, following his marriage with the Nepalese princess, Bhrikuti. And it was Bhrikuti who had taken Buddhism across the Himalayas. So the credit for spreading Buddhism in this part of the world naturally has gone to this royal lady. And this Gumba also was built by a Nepalese artist.'

Pointing to the art objects in the Gumba, Lakpa Sherpa said, 'Look at this art. This is an old thing. But see, how beautiful it is! This Gumba stands as a monument of the relations between Nepal and Tibet. And this is the first religious shrine built in this region.'

Hundreds of Lamas were reciting the holy scriptures sitting at one place and at the same time. And lines of pilgrims were continually moving towards the Gumba. Daily thousands of Tibetans arrived here to offer their prayers. They maintained a strong belief that every person born in Tibet had to make his pilgrimage to this Gumba. Only then his birth would be meaningful. Therefore the influx of pilgrims visiting this Gumba never stopped.

Coming out of the Gumba, we went around it, making a holy round, by the right, and moved towards the Bhakhor Bazaar on a sightseeing tour. Crowds of Tibetan were also moving in the same direction. But, we came to know, they were just making their holy rounds of the Gumba. In the process, they did it for hundreds of time. This was the reason why this Bazaar was always crowded.

Pointing to the shops of the Bazaar, Lakpa Sherpa said, 'All these shops belong to the Nepalese.' And he, approaching to the shopkeepers, began to talk in Nepali.

Observing the shops, I could see the Nepalese goods on display. We did not see any Chinese shop in this Bazaar. Upon asking how the Nepalese could have established their supremacy in this Bazaar, Lakpa Sherpa said, 'Since the time of the Tibetan king, Tshrong-Chen-Gampo, Nepalese traders began to exert their influence for their supremacy in the business of this country. In the seventeenth century, they had concluded a treaty between Nepal

and Tibet for establishing thirty- two trading centers in Lhasa and other cities of Tibet. There was also a provision in the treaty that the Nepalese silver coins would be accepted as a legal tender in Tibet.'

'You mean, Nepalese currency was legal here? And since that time the Nepalese have been doing their trade business in this country?' said Gagan, expressing his surprise.

'Yes,' Lakpa Sherpa said, 'since that time the arrangement for establishing the "Wakil's Office" (Representative's office of Nepal Government) had also been made.'

'What was this "Wakil's Office" for?' said Gagan, asking for explanation.

'This "Wakil's Office" represented the Nepal Government and the purpose of it was to protect the Nepalese citizens residing in this country,' said Lakpa.

Lakpa Sherpa was telling many things which I did not know before. With such conversations we are going around. In the meantime, we entered a Nepalese shop. The shopkeeper looked like a Tibetan, but he spoke Nepali quite well. His name was Dhundup. He respectfully gestured us to take our seats on the nearby chairs. We were also feeling happy to be in Dhundup's shop.

Looking around the shop, Gagan said, 'Can one do private business here?'

'Yes, one can' said Dhundup in reply, 'At first we had to face some difficulties. But now it is all right. As we are Nepalese, and under the treaty between our two countries, we have been doing our trade business over centuries, so we are now allowed to carry it on. On the other hand, we have been supplying the Tibetans their necessities or whatever is required by our trade business. The Tibetans also like doing their shopping in the Nepalese shops more than in the Chinese shops.'

'It seems, you have a good hold upon the business here. And the Chinese do not want to interfere with you. Right?' said Gagan.

'Well, the main trade business is in the hands of the Chinese themselves, such as wool, sheep, cattle and other natural products and resources are under their control. We just supply the people here their daily requirement of consumers' goods as we have been doing over a long time. That's all,' said Dhundup.

Upon asking about the first coming of the Nepalese traders and their establishments here, Dhundup said, 'The region between Tibet and China is very difficult. As the nearest city for Lhasa is Kathmandu, the nearest railway

head is Raxaul and the nearest sea dock is in Calcutta of India. And we can travel to Nepal all the year round.'

'Why? Are the Chinese cities far away from here?' I said.

'Yes! They are very far,' said Dhundup, 'The distance between Lhasa and Kathmandu is only eight hundred fifty kilometers, whereas that of the city of Chengdu in Sichuan province is twenty-four hundred kilometers. And the nearest Chinese railway station is the Garmu station which is six hundred kilometers away from here. Moreover, the Karakoram and the Kulung Himalayan mountains, which are the sub-ranges of the main Kulu range, surround a cold desert land of hundreds of miles, which separates Tibet from China,' Dhundup said, putting all he knew before us about the region.

In the meantime, a group of Tibetan pilgrims entered the shop. They looked at the goods in the shop as well as at us. Dhundup stopped talking to us and went over to the customers and talked. One of them said something to Dhundup. I guessed, he must have said something about us.

Dhundup, turning towards us, said, 'He is asking whether you have brought the photos of the Dalai Lama. If you have, he wants to buy it. But I have told them, you don't have the photos.'

'What? Photos of Dalai Lama?'

'Yes! Photos of Dalai Lama! If they have a photo of Dalai Lama in their house they believe they will be very lucky,' said Dhundup, as an explanation.

'Where is Dalai Lama now?,' said Gagan, turning towards me.

Before I said something in reply to Gagan's question, Dhundup said, 'Oh! you don't know where Dalai Lama is? He is staying at the "Dharmashala" in Himachal Pradesh of India. He has not given up his traditions even there. He has dedicated himself for Tibet and the Tibetans. He is the religious teacher and the only leader of the Tibetans.'

'Tibet is a theocratic state. Dalai Lama is the theocratic leader of this state. This theocratic state belongs to him and it will continue to be so into the future,' Dhundup further said, affirming his statements, 'Religion and politics are the names of the same thing, or they mean the same thing. I mean, the goal of both is to do good to mankind and to give protection to mankind. In this world as there is not only one type of geographical make-up, so is about people, society, culture and customs which are so deeply related to life and death of the people.'

In the meantime, another group of people entered the shop. These people were very fierce-looking in their appearance. They were tall and strong physically and had worn long head of hairs and had made up their heads with

red and black cotton thread bands. And they had also visibly sported the long Tibetan daggers on their loins. In the group there was one woman and four men. They were looking at the goods in the shop and asking for the price. Dhundup became busy with them, showing them goods and telling the prices. We were just watching them and observing their appearance and manners.

The woman in the group had made up her hair with strings of turquoise. And a big piece of turquoise set in silver was hung on top of her forehead. And as a necklace she had worn a string of coral and turquoise which heightened her beauty. With her beauty and make up she appeared to be the gem of the group.

When Lakpa noticed our interest on these people, he said, 'This woman might be the wife of these four men.'

'What you said?' said Gagan unbelievably.

'Yes! What I am saying is true. According to the customs here the wife of the eldest brother can marry her brothers-in-law if she wants to. The brothers cannot marry against her will. They have to take their brother's wife as their wife, too. Thus the Tibetan society is organized differently compared to other societies in the world. This is a matriarchal society organized under the headship of women,' said Lakpa, giving us this unusual information.

'Are females less than males, so that they have such a custom here?' said Gagan with curiosity.

'Maybe,' I said, supporting the opinion of Gagan, 'And more', I added, 'this maybe the reason for another custom according to which one man out of every two has to become "Lama". However, this opinion is only my guess.'

Yes! According to the treaty between Nepal and Tibet, the sons born of the Nepalese father will become Nepalese citizens, whereas the daughters become the citizens of Tibet. I am a Nepalese citizen. My father is a Nepalese. That's why I am allowed to stay here. said Dhundup about himself.

According to his version, even the father of his grand-father was a businessman. His grandfather, his father and he himself were born in Lhasa. The customs that they maintain are Tibetan, but they are Nepalese citizens. If Lhasa is the main city of Tibet, this bazaar is the heart of Lhasa, as well as the holiest shrine for the Tibetans and a place which equals with Heaven for them.

We heard a man yelling just outside the shop. He was begging on the sidewalk. One of his legs was amputated. So he stood with the help of the crutch and yelled, 'Attention! Stand easy!' attracting even the pedestrians who were surrounding him and watching him act. We also got out of the shop and watched him act.

While the lookers-on were watching him with keen interest, he stood on one leg and posed the crutch like a gun uttering the popping sounds of gun-fire and started yelling. More people gathered around him.

'At first he was a Tibetan soldier. In 1949 when China invaded Tibet, this fellow was shot in the leg by the red Chinese army. So he lost one of his legs,' Dhundup stopped the story as some customers entered the shop.

'Salam! Sap!,' said the lame man, greeting us in a purely Nepali style used by the Nepalese soldiers to their senior officers. We were puzzled. He was attracting us too like he did the other people.

We moved towards the shop of Dhundup again. Though he was busy in his shop, yet he treated us as respectfully as before. He managed chairs, requested us to take our seats and said, 'Please! Take your seat! I order for tea!'

'Does the man know Nepali, too?' said Gagan, wanting to know more about that curious lame man.

'Oh!' said Dhundup, laughing lightly, 'Yes! He knows some Nepali naturally.'

'Yes! He was greeting us in the style of Nepalese soldiers with 'salam sap!'' said Gagan, trying to draw information about the man from Dhundup.

'Until 1949 there was a platoon of Nepalese soldiers here', said Dhundup.

'Oh! That's why,' said Gagan, satisfied with the explanation.

'The man abuses the Chinese soldiers. Though he has only one leg now, he always challenges the Chinese with fresh new attacks again. With such acting and posing he has now become a center of amusement for the people coming from the countryside,' Dhundup goes on to say, 'The Chinese soldiers have arrested him many times to take action against him, but when he is released, he starts the acting over again.'

'When people get angry, they behave like this!', and trying to give new turn to the topic of the conversation, I said, 'Would you please tell us something on the present religious situation here?'

'The Tibetans, who are the followers of Buddhism, even still today believe that the Dalai Lama is a living Buddha', said Dhundup, expressing his opinion with simplicity.

'And you?', said Gagan, questioning him.

'I also profess the same religion which the Tibetans here profess,' said Dhundup, clarifying his own position regarding religion.

Now Lakpa Sherpa, expressing his views and experience, said, 'the Tibetan king, Tshrong-Chen- Gampo married the Nepalese princess, Bhrikuti

in seventh century. After one year he married the Chinese princess, Won-Tchang of the Thang Dynasty. At this time, Buddhism was established here against the background of Pon-Fo religion here,' he further said, 'The Tibetan society which is maintained and run by "Lamaism" or the religion of the Lamas, is happy and peaceful.'

'He is right!', said Dhundup, supporting Lakpa Sherpa and he further went to say, 'Every aspect of Tibetan social system has been deeply influenced by religion here which has, in turn, influenced the system and governance of the state also.'

'Do you think it to be right to capture the state -power on the basis of religion?' I said, putting my curiosity before Dhundup and Lakpa Sherpa.

'Religion is an important element for the protection of human life. Religion is the basis for the peace and happiness of human life. Religion is a powerful mooring of security and safety. It is religion on the basis of which this world and all the living beings in it are maintained. He further went on, 'Every individual grows up in a society and he naturally absorbs the social and cultural traditions and norms of that given society. Now the individual can feel happy and fulfilled only when the person is given opportunity to live in the same society, maintaining the same customs and traditions with which the individual has grown up.'

Lakpa Sherpa expressed his support to the statement of Dhundup regarding religion and politics, because he had seen the open interference by political power in a society where religion and politics are one. Lakpa Sherpa was also a witness when the Lamas were shot dead point blank by the Chinese soldiers who also pulled down the Buddhist Bihars and Gumbas. Sherpa also told us many things about the difference of religion and politics. We went on listening him. Gagan also listened quietly without posing any question.

I looked at my watch. Observing me looking at my watch, Dhundup said, 'Do you have to go anywhere?'

'Yes! We have still many places to go.'

'Which places have you been so far? Have you visited Chukla-Khan temple? It is just here, just behind. And you should see the huge statue of Shakya Muni the Buddha in the Potala Palace,' said Dhundup and went on, 'If you have time, you should visit the famous Nam-Cho Lake. It is called the "Lake of the Heaven". It is one of our great holy shrines. The holy lake Manasarovar of Hindu religions fame is also located here.'

'Yes! Tibet is the land where there are sources of most of the rivers that flow through Asia,' said Gagan supporting Dhundup.

'I want to see these places, but it depends upon the time factor,' I said, expressing my opinion on our situation.

Dhundup said, 'If you could stay with the Tibetans at their homes as guests then you would realize how much hospitable these people are. And you would know that Tibetans know how to respect their guests and give them human treatment!,' he further said, 'But we are sorry! We cannot make you stay at our homes even as our guests for one night because you are foreigners. Such is the policy of the present government.'

'What do you mean?' said Gagan meanwhile.

'He is right! we are foreigners. We should stay at the hotels where tourists stay. If we are to stay at some Chinese home, then we have to obtain special permission of the government. Don't you know?' I said, explaining Gagan the matter.

'Well! I know it is so in China. But in Tibet I didn't realize it to be so here, too. I was taking this place separately!,' said Gagan with his own explanation.

'But, as you are a Nepalese citizen, it should not have been applied on you. Should it?,' I said with my curiosity.

'Look! we are very sorry! On this matter we are helpless. Though we are allowed to do our business here, we cannot take any outsider out of our own family in our homes, even as our guests. And we have to register our family members officially. If any relatives come from Nepal, we put them at the hotels where tourists stay, and there is no alternative. This is the policy here,' said Dhundup with regret.

'Yes! Because of such policy and behavior people are unhappy here,' said Lakpa, supporting Dhundup.

'I want to tell you something interesting, if you want to know. Do you?' said Dundup in a serious mood.

'Go ahead!' I said.

Gagan also was showing his curiosity. Lakpa Sherpa's attention was centered on Dhundup, too. As there were no customers in the shop, we could talk freely.

With deep seriousness and in an undertone, Dhundup began, 'I am going to tell you a truth and the truth is - this is my house, I mean, I own it. My grandfather had built it and it had twenty rooms when it was first built. Then my father rebuilt it adding twenty more rooms to it. And I was born in this very house.'

'Oh! Is this your own house then?' said Gagan, expressing his surprise.

'Yes! But I have to pay rent. I am a tenant in my own house.'

'How much do you pay?'

'I do not pay much. It is just a little, but I pay anyway.'

'How many rooms you are using?'

'I have two rooms upstairs and this one for the shop. That's all.'

'And the remaining rooms?'

'Other people are living in them. I need two more rooms, but I am not getting them. What can I do? Nothing! Nothing but to put up with it.'

'If you don't mind, I want to ask you a question.'

'Yes, with pleasure.'

'You are a Nepalese, but you do not go to Nepal. Why?'

This question put Dhundup in an odd situation. He was looking at us silently. For a while there was 'quiet and emptiness' in the atmosphere of the shop room.

Dhundup began in an undertone, 'I have not taken Nepalese citizenship at my sweet will. I had to take it under compulsion. I do not have relatives in Nepal actually. So why should I go there? My father and grand-father were born here and died here. I was also born here. My sisters were married here. Moreover, it is very difficult to give up one's religion, culture and society. This you can understand very well yourselves.' Dhundup stopped suddenly.

We understood, that Dhundup was a full-fledged citizen of Tibet, but had to pose himself as a Nepalese citizen through fabrication or cooking a story that his grand-father's father was a Nepalese, so he was also a Nepalese. Thus he was allowed to live in Lhasa and carry on his business. This he told us himself. He also told us in clear terms that when the situation in Tibet would change, he would give up Nepalese citizenship. At first, we had taken him as our countryman and were talking to him in a fraternal spirit.

But we now found him to be a Nepalese only in name but not in reality. However, the poor fellow had no other way but this trick to make himself legitimate to live here and carry on his business.

In the meantime, a gentleman entered the shop. He looked like a Tibetan. He talked to Dhundup in Tibetan. Maybe, he was making inquiry about us. When he was told we were Nepalese, he began to talk with us in Nepali. He was also a shopkeeper. His shop was just across the road. His name was Khilela. All this information was given to us by Dhundup.

When he came to know that we were discussing about Tibet, he asked, 'What information do you want?'

'Not anything specific', I said to Khilela not to stretch the matter further.

'Yes! Khilela is well-versed on Tibet,' Dhundup added. We said nothing. We only wanted to listen to Khilela. So we were just watching his face. Perhaps our silence was our consent. He started commenting upon the ancient history of Tibet. According to his version, Tibet is a fully independent country. And he also told us that the authentic history of Tibet began only from seventh century A.D.

As we are taking interest in his statements, he went on, 'The old capital of Tibet was "Loga". Only from seventh century onward Lhasa became the Capital of Tibet. From that time onward until 1949 Tibet was an independent country.'

'How was Tibet robbed of her independence?' Gagan questioned Khilela.

'How shall I explain it? Well! I should say,' Khilela went on, 'When Mao-Tsetung's Proletarian Party captured the central China in 1949, since then they were threatening Tibet with their invasion. In 1951 Nawa Nawang- Jigme and the Chinese government concluded a Seventeen Point Treaty between Tibet and China and since then Tibet was declared as an Autonomous Region of China,' Khilela further said, 'But this treaty was not signed by the popular representative or the head ruler of Tibet, Dalai Lama.'

'But how was it concluded then?'

'Well! They concluded it somehow. Don't you know that the powerful dominates the weak?' Clarifying the matters Khilela further said, 'In the treaty there was also a provision according to which Dalai Lama will not be sacked from his position,' He further added, 'Though in 1956 Tibet was declared an Autonomous Region of China and the central government of China had appointed Nawa Nawang- Jigme as Secretary General and Dalai Lama as the Head of the State, yet on the accusation of violating the Seventeen Point Treaty, the Chinese people's liberation army started an armed revolution in 1959.'

'What happened afterwards?'

'What else could it be? Dalai Lama was deported to India. Thousands of people lost their lives!'

'Now is it all right?'

'Even now, time and again, Chinese soldiers attack our villages and towns.'

'Do you think, there are still some elements fighting for the liberation of Tibet?' ·

'Yes! There are. Why not? They will go on fighting until there are Tibetans at every level of administration of Tibet. Until then these elements will keep breeding inside and outside the closed rooms.'

'May be!'

Supporting Khilela's views, Dhundup said, 'Look! From 1966 to 1976 how many Bihars and Gumbas, and the Lamas and other religious minded people must have been destroyed under the Cultural Revolution, imagine! Who will compensate these losses?'

Presenting what I knew, I said, 'Well! in 1978 they realized and accepted the fact of their wrong-doing under the Cultural Revolution in the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and they have brought it out to the masses accordingly. What else do you want?'

'Don't you think it is shameless to remain on the saddle of power after accepting their wrong-doing?' said Dhundup, trying to excite and stretch the discussion further.

'Shamelessness has no meaning for these people! They treat the whole humanity like lifeless machines. They do not know how to treat human beings like human beings. They will awaken and realize it only when they will be thrown out of their seat of power. Then they will realize and say to themselves, "Oh! we have been the enemy of mankind! We have been the devils!" And under the grip of such ill-feelings they will go to their death-beds!' said Dhundup, unfolding his inner feeling unawares.

'But I think, you are overlooking the physical development they have brought here. See! here in Lhasa how many new buildings have come up and new roads have been built. Were it all possible under the old rulers?' I said, trying to change the subject.

'This development is natural.'

'Well! Look! So many things here are sold so cheap. These goods are supplied from other provinces of China. I have heard that the companies which supply goods to Tibet are given concessions on sales tax?' I said.

'Yes! That's true! But most of the consumers' goods that the Tibetans use come from Nepal,' said Khilela. 'They do not produce goods in China to meet the requirements of the Tibetans. They supply us whatever goods they have in their stocks. This is the reason why the Nepalese and Indian goods make roaring business here.'

'It is so because Nepal and India are closer. Don't you think so?'

'It may be so. But, at the same time we should remember that Tibetans are desirous for using Nepalese and Indian goods.'

We spent hours conversing and discussing topics of our interest, Gagan was getting more and more interested as he was benefitted from our discussion on trade and business with plenty of information.

'Allow me to invite you to tea in my shop,' said Khilela.

'O.K.! Tomorrow when we will be coming to this side, we will drop in your shop definitely!' I promised.

Three of us went to Lhasa Hotel. As there were three beds in our room, we requested Lakpa Sherpa to stay with us for the night.

About 1.00 p.m. in the night, someone knocked at the door of our room. I woke up and went to open the door. All of us got out of bed. And we didn't know what was the matter! After their argument with Lakpa Sherpa for a while we came to know that it was against the rule for Lakpa Sherpa stayed with us in our room. No outsiders were allowed to stay in the hotel with the guests. Action was sure to be taken against Lakpa Sherpa. He told us and he was taken away by the security guards of the hotel.

Lakpa Sherpa was appearing very miserable when he said, taking leave of us, 'Sorry! Good-buy! I am going with them.'

We were feeling miserable ourselves. We could not sleep all night. Only in the dawn we had some cat-naps.

We spent seven days in Lhasa, gathering new experiences of a new place, learning new things and ideas. We always had to complain about food. Often the food was stale. So we could not enjoy food here. We had to satisfy ourselves with hot water. That's all!

After fixing everything, we left Lhasa Hotel for the Konga airport. It was morning time. The airport was ninety kilometers away. It took us about one hour and forty minutes to reach the airport. The road was good, so the car could run with speed and arrived at the airport earlier.

Before 9.00 a.m. our plane took off from the Konga airport for the city of Chengdu in the Sichuan province. This airport was used only in the morning time and was built with military point of view. And this airport was connected with the city of Chengdu only.

Some years before I had only peeped into Tibet from the border of my country and I had cherished a great wish to visit Tibet someday. I saw it now, though I had not seen all of Tibet. Whatever I saw of this ancient country,

has made me happy and satisfied in the inner core of my mind. But from the plane, I could see nothing except cold desert land.

Chapter 9

'Unified natural condition creates blind power. To make it useful (to human life), it has to be divided' - This was the theory of the celebrated Chinese engineer who was born four centuries ago. His name was Libin.

Over centuries the fertile lands of the province of Sichuan were suffering because of the floods of the Duzyang yan river and from droughts. This river would never be useful to the farmers of the Sichuan province. Thus the living standard of the farming community of this region could never improve because of the damage and loss caused by the Duzyang yan river and by droughts. Thus four centuries ago the Chinese engineer named Libin had started to build the Sichuan Irrigation Project on the basis of his theory that 'only division can weaken the blind power.'

When the Irrigation Project was completed, it brought prosperity to the farmers of the vast region of Sichuan province, and engineer Libin became a demigod to the farming community of the region.

All this information was given to me by a Chinese friend whose name was also Libin. My friend Libin worked in a government trading company. When I arrived in Chengdu, I contacted him, since then we stuck together wherever we went.

In this trip Gagan was not with me. For, following our arrival in Chengdu, we decided to have some sort of division of labor and parted our ways. He went to the old capital of Shian. And according to our program, we would be meeting in the city of Uhan this weekend. I was with Libin on the tour to the world famous Irrigation Project which is sixty kilometers away from Changdu.

'This is a coincidence that my name happened to be the name of the engineer who was born four centuries ago, but I cannot be as great as he was,' said my friend Libin in English while we were sitting on the bank of the Duzyang yan.

'You can be! why not? You can work and become as famous as he' I said, trying to know his reaction.

'Impossible!' he said laughing.

'For those who have courage and constructive aggressiveness, impossibilities turn into possibilities,' I said, trying to encourage him.

'Yes! Hitler and Mao would say the same thing,' he said in response to my statement.

'No! I don't mean that! I am not proposing to turn you into those sorts of personalities. I am your friend!,' I said in a jovial manner.

Then we arrived at the Dragon House. This was the main place from where one could have the view of the dam of the Irrigation Project. And it was here where they had the display of the photos of the visits and observations of the Irrigation Project by all the Heads of State. Two figures of Dragons were placed on the top of the upper roof of the artistic building.

Observing the magnificence of the building and its design, one was inclined to guess that the building must have been designed and built by Libin himself four centuries ago.

According to the Chinese culture, the 'Dragon' is a god who coordinates the earth and the sky and is always busy in doing good to mankind. Moreover, the Dragon is, specifically, supposed to be a god who controls rain and floods. So the Dragon House was built in the middle of the river. And it made the river look like a canal. The canals flowing on the right and left of the Dragon House were doing much good to the multitude of people of this region.

The Irrigation Project was of a simple design. To control the force of the river, its water was distributed into a number of canals. This simple formula had been quite instructive and enlightening to people over the last four centuries.

'This formula is applicable not only in the case of the rivers, but also in the case of managing the states,' said Libin.

Yes! I was listening to Libin and understood what he was saying. The formula given by Libin who was born four centuries ago was well grasped by the modern day Libin. And it was not surprising to me. Libin had graduated on international trade and he could speak and write English quite well. According to him, he had made a number of foreign friends. I believed him.

Libin was blessed with gentle nature, cheerful face and smart physique and was well- cultivated in hospitality. He impressed me at our first meeting that he had ability to make friends. This was the third time I was meeting him.

The company for which he worked was making good profits. He cherished a hope to go to Singapore or Hong Kong as a representative of his company. This is why he learned English. And his English was quite good. He tried his level best to develop foreign trade of his company. I met him for the second time in the city of Ningbo which is one of the main industrial cities of China. Then he had told me that he was going to Singapore the same year, but I found he had not. I knew why he could not go to Singapore. But why should I ask him poking my nose into the matter? Had he been assigned on the trips to Singapore or Hong Kong, his company would have made good business and good money.

At first he talked only business. Later on when we got closer to each other, he started talking about private affairs also. He became frank and free in his talking to me. He wanted to know my opinion on power centralization and decentralization. He also wanted to discuss the responsibility and decision making. All this had come out of his political consciousness and curiosity, but he could not express himself clearly, because he was not a politician.

I was not reacting to his statements. We were now moving along the river-side observing the place. We saw the objects of arts and crafts here. We also saw the large temple in which Libin's statue was enshrined. The Chinese people of the region worshipped the enshrined statue, enshrined offering, burning incense and kneeling down before it like they did before the statue of the Buddha.

After a long walk we reached the top of a hill. From here one could have the full view of the irrigation project very clearly.

Pointing out Libin said, 'See! How large area it has covered! How many working hands had been engaged in building this project, you imagine! To build such a huge project successfully in those days is a clear proof of the ability of the Chinese people. I feel the history is speaking out that the Chinese people can match, in ability, to any people in the world!' I expressed cordially.

'Yes! you are the first foreigner in my knowledge who is appreciating the Chinese people for their ability!' said Libin with satisfaction, 'So you believe the Chinese were brave, civilized and cultured!'

There was nothing wrong in Libin's statement. And I also had nothing to say in the way of formality to Libin, because he was my friend. Whatever I said, I did on the basis of facts and figures I saw and experienced here. Foremost of the things here was the Great Wall. No matter how many year it took, how

many generations labored on it, digging the earth, building the bricks, however at last it was built to be one of the wonders of the world. It was indeed something marvellous to see by the generations to come. So, supporting Libin's statements, I said emphatically, 'You are right! The Chinese people are brave, civilized, and cultured. The evidence of this can be seen all over China.'

'I have no words to thank you for your praise of the Chinese people,' said Libin, expressing his nationalistic sentiments.

Though he said he had made many foreign friends, he had, however, got no opportunity to visit Europe and America. And he thought the people living in Europe and America lived in paradise. And his kindred people of Japan, he believed, were fortunate. Though he was an educated man, a graduate, spoke quite good English, yet he seemed to be suffering from inferiority feelings. Trying to make himself sure, he said, 'We Chinese have our own culture and traditions, haven't we?'

'Yes, sure!, I said without hesitation. Though Libin had grown up in a new environment and atmosphere, he had so far not been able to know who he was. Living and growing within the bounds of limited facilities, Libin seemed to have developed shy nature though he was a man of ability. Now I knew much about him without his telling me. I could say, Libin could be an expert man-power for building a New China!

In front of me were standing both the Libins - one of the past, another of the present. Provided he got opportunity, the Libin of the present might prove himself as capable as the Libin of the past. The present Libin seemed to possess abilities in all respects, thus, I expressed my feelings about him, 'Libin! If you got an opportunity, the Libin of the present might prove himself as capable as the celebrated Libin of the past.'

What I said brought about a change in the facial expression of Libin. His laughing time and again also disappeared. Now he was lost in thoughts, and lost within himself and was gazing blankly toward the river-banks of the Duzyang yan. I was watching Libin with his changed face with my slanting eyes now and then and looking at times on the river banks of the Duzyang yan myself.

Breaking the silence of the short while, he said, 'My friend! Let me tell you, my life is passing through the dark.' While he said this, his eyes appeared watery. He did not want to say anything more than this and did not want to explain either why his life was dark. Saying 'Life is dark!' all of a sudden he embraced me and broke into a cry like a lover embracing the beloved pouring out all the pains of his heart.

A friend, who always talked so cheerfully, was in such a condition that made me feel very bad. However, I did not venture to say anything at the moment.

I was not directly paying attention towards his worry-some face. I pretended rather keeping myself busy looking on the mountains and green fields and forests and the dry banks of the river.

After a pretty long time he spoke out himself, 'Hello! should we move now? Or stay for some time more?'

'No! Let's move!'

Then both of us started climbing down the hill. It took about fifteen minutes to reach where our vehicle was. He said, 'How do you like this place?'

The answer that he had expected and I should have supplied should have been, 'Oh! It is a beautiful place!' Or 'Oh! It is a worth-visiting place!' Or something along the line. But, instead, I said, 'Oh! It is a school of politics and mathematics!'

'What did you say? sorry?' he was puzzled by my answer.

'Yes! I have experienced the "deep" and the "complex" rather than the "pleasant".'

He laughed at what I said. Joining him in his laughter, I was laughing louder than he was.

We moved towards the city of Chengdu by car. Chengdu is the main city of the Shichua province and one of the main industrial cities of China. From here one can go to all the provinces of China by air, by train or by car. That's why this is supposed to be one of the main cities of China.

Chengdu is a large and beautiful city with its old and new high-rise buildings. The roads are aligned with green trees and shrubs. Some roads, specially the ring-road, are so beautiful with multicolored flower-beds all along that they look as if leading us to some beautiful park. And the arrangement of multicolored light is such that it makes the city look like a fairy with multicolored decoration.

I was thinking how this city was made so beautiful. In the meantime, the car entered a mechanical washing house, and suddenly my musing on the beauty of the city was shattered. They had the rule that all the cars that entered the city had to get washed in the mechanical washing house. While our car was also getting washed, we were still inside it with closed doors. For the most modern automatic washing, you had to pay some charge also. This system helped to keep the city clean. I understood it, like others, later on.

Libin dropped me at Ji-Jyang Hotel and moved on towards his office. We were scheduled to meet tomorrow morning. He would come tomorrow to take me on sightseeing of the Leshan Buddha and the Imai mountain. As I was tired, I also went to my room to take rest.

According to our program, I got a telephone call in the early morning. Libin had already arrived in the hotel lobby. I also got ready hurriedly and went down to the lobby.

We then moved on towards Leshan Buddha. We passed through several small and large villages on our way. As it was lunch time, we stopped at a village for our lunch.

Before lunch we went to see the small market place in the village where the villagers brought their home products for sale. As I was a foreigner, they were watching me with curiosity. And as Libin was in neck-tie and suit, he too was looking different from the villagers gathered there.

Libin said, 'The economic condition of the villagers has not yet developed well. After liberation the party had proclaimed that within two decades the economic condition of every Chinese citizen could be compared to that of the citizens of any developed country of the world,' He continued, 'Look at this girl! She has brought this "Oshon" (green vegetable), for sale. If she becomes unable to sell this vegetable, she will have no money to buy food for her family.'

'Oh!' I said, pointing to the boy who was about fifteen or sixteen in age, 'Why is this boy doing business while he should have been at school?'

'Maybe, he has no guardians to look after him, said he and began to inquire with the boy in the local language.

The boy's mother had died of illness. Now, in the family, he had his father and three brothers and sisters. And now in the family there were only two earning members - his father and himself. This was the reason why he had to leave the school. It was three years now since he left school. The boy also told Libin that as his forefathers were farmers, he also was going to be a farmer whether he went to school or not.

'The life of the villagers is miserable! Many of the villages have not changed. The change that you see in the cities has not yet reached villages. It means, the system has not yet developed here.'

'What do you mean by system?'

'I mean, there is no institution purchasing the products of the farmers for the values they deserve. Though there are some such institutions, the farmers do not get the right prices they deserve from them.' Libin went on, 'A farmer cannot produce everything which he requires for the whole year. And

he has to depend upon the market. And the principle of the market is to make more profit. This burden falls upon the ordinary farmers on both buying and selling. This is what I mean. And the system has not developed.'

'There must be some company to buy the products of the farmers in proper prices.'

'Yes, there is. But the company also has to make profits. Moreover, the functioning of the responsible authority depends upon his decision making capacity. Last year,' Libin continued, 'thousands of tons of food grains had gone rotten. And there was none to take responsibility for this. And the result was this year the farmers showed less interest to produce food grains. Now think for yourself. Had there been a good system, could such unfortunate things happen?' said Libin, explaining me in detail.

Pointing out to a young girl who had laid out four eggs on a piece of cloth for sale before her, I said, 'How much for those eggs?'

'Maybe one moze. That is, one tenth of a yuans.'

'Is she selling her eggs just to make four mazes?'

'Yes! These eggs are laid by her own hen which is her personal property. So she has come here to sell her eggs. No other member of the family makes claim on this money which she makes out of the selling of those eggs. She can spend the money as she likes or save it.'

It was not a new phenomenon of human life for me. It goes just like this in my country also. To save is just animal nature. Every animal, every living being, saves, whether it is an ant or a mouse or any other living being. And human beings are crazy on saving. There is no limit of human greed. That is why man is not satisfied and fulfilled in his mind. Until one attains mental or spiritual satisfaction, one is not really living his life in a proper manner. So this aspect of human life is very important.

'If an individual saves one moze daily, is not it the saving of the national wealth?' said Libin.

'Definitely it is,' I said, supporting and turning his doubtful statement into a fact.

At the end of our going around the bazaar with such discussion, we went to a restaurant for our lunch. We ordered for Chinese food. Before and after our lunch, Libin told me many things about the social conditions in the Chinese villages. According to him, Chinese society was a male-dominated society, or a patriarchal society. So to treat women like men is an exploitation of women. Such was the present day theory which could not be useful to build a civilized and developed society.

His thinking might not be right in the modern times. Today they were demanding equal rights for both man and woman. Actually it is wrong to make any difference between man and woman. But Libin thought equality did not mean 'equality' in every respect. Because differences were in the creation of nature herself. So absolute equality was not possible. If equality was imposed by force, it would be unpracticable and unnatural.

His statements made it clear that the development and stability of society required the patriarchal type of society and not the type in which men and women are equal in every respect. But on this I had my own principle and logic. I did not agree with him on his logic. However, I did not want to pick up an argument with him. After lunch we moved on towards our next destination.

We arrived at the Leshan Buddha situated at the Min-Ziang, that is, on the bank of the Min river. The statue of the Buddha was unusually huge, measuring about three hundred feet on its height. The statue was on a sitting position as if on a chair or on a platform, and it seemed carved out of a solid mountain rock.

As it was a tourist center, it had good management of everything, such as restaurant, hotel and transport services and other facilities for the tourists.

Libin said, 'This is the largest statue of the Buddha in the world.'

After our sightseeing of the Leshan Buddha, we went to stay at one of the nearby hotels in the city of Loshan. Next morning we left for the Imai mountain.

We arrived at the base of the Imai Mountain about, 10.0'clock in the morning. At the base of the Mountain from where we had to start climbing up, a group of young and strong men approached us and began to pull at us. At first I was frightened. But when Libin explained why they were pulling at us, I calmed down. They were just porters who carried travellers up to the cable station in the Mountain on their palanquins for some charges. We hired some of them and were carried by the porters up to the cable station on the palanquins.

Getting down from the palanquins, we went up into the cable cars and got to the top of the Imai Mountain. The top of the Mountain was clear. So was the sky. But down below it was covered by fog, so it looked like a lake. There were many old and new temples on the top of the Mountain. The Chinese people still had the traditional belief that the peak of the Imai Mountain was the ladder to climb up to the Heaven.

They had another tradition according to which they paid homage to their dead relatives offering pieces of paper or burning incense from the top of

the Imai Mountain. And some people also wrote something on the currency notes or pieces of paper and made the offering.

Libin also wrote something on a ten yuans currency note and threw down from the Mountain top in the name of his dead father. The ten yuans currency note that Libin offered to his dead father with and reverence went down flying for three minutes which we watched with interest. Later it disappeared in the fog. I found Libin believing in superstitions though he was born in a new age and brought up in a new environment and atmosphere. I, however, did not show any reaction over this matter.

We then descended by the same cable car to the base and walked some distance to our car. We then departed for the city of Chengdu. We arrived at Chengdu by the evening. According to our program we had to go to another city, Tchung-king. Tchung-king is another main city of the Sichuan Province.

In the process of buying and selling, we were going to inspect the goods of Libin's company. For this purpose we were visiting Tchung-king. We were departing for Tchung-king by the evening train.

The Chinese Railway is quite good. They supply bed and blankets in the night travel, so passengers do not have to carry bedding in China as in India. We had boarded the train at 6 in the evening at Chengdu to arrive at Tchung-king by 8 a.m. next morning.

It was morning. The place was cold. We had to wait for some time for taxi. Then we arrived at the hotel where we had our reservation. We had just finished our breakfast when a car from the company arrived to take us.

The city of Tchung-king was spread out over the hill from top to bottom across the large river. We could have the view across the river very well. The old houses were low built. The new ones were tall and shining. So we could sort out the old houses from the new ones. The somewhat slope, broad and clean roads were aligned with green waving trees. It was morning time, so there were the road cleaning and washing vehicles busy in the job. The roads looked clean as such, but they were, never the less giving a through wash.

We crossed the river and got to the other part of the city. The part on the left looked more beautiful than the other side. Tchung-king city supposed to be salutary from the viewpoint of climate, was also a commercial and industrial center. The Yangzi river was a factor for the development of trade and commerce of this city. The river ran connecting several cities of China and finally joined the main Pacific harbor of Shanghai. Varied sizes of steamers sailed between this city and Shanghai. This city of Tchung-king was situated in the middle of China. And it was three thousand kilometers away from Shanghai.

We were going to visit a motor-cycle factory. When we were getting near the factory, Libin said something. He said, 'My sister works here in this factory.'

'Oh! Yes?' I said, and wanted to know more about his sister. In reply he said, 'My sister is not happy. She is unmarried. And she is working in the same post over one decade. After her graduation in engineering, she had started to work in this factory.'

'She is an engineer then? She must be doing well.'

'Well or not well, you will see for yourself. My sister's class-fellow is the General Manager over seven hundred staff here in this factory.'

'How could he be?' He tried all possible means to be.'

I said, 'He must be a cleaver man,' because I understood what he meant.

'He is, definitely. Otherwise how could he be the General Manager within a decade?'

With such conversation we arrived at the factory. First of all, we went to see the General Manager. We had informed him already about our visit to the factory. So he came out of his office to receive us. I shook hands to show my formality. Both of us exchanged our visiting cards. His name was Won-Yi.

Showing a little bit of flattery to the Manager, Libin said, 'This factory is running under his leadership. He is the head figure here.'

Looking at his name in the card, I said, 'His name explains by itself that he is the first personality here. The word "one" is the first number of English, so is the word "Yi" in Chinese.

So, in all respects, he is the first personality.

Maybe, Won-yi understood what I said in English, so he laughed.

Libin and me joined him, laughing. When all three of us were laughing, Won-yi's assistants also joined us in the laughter though they had not understood what I said. Thus our first meeting was very pleasant.

It was a motor cycle making factory, but the factory had no right to export its products. Only the companies that had secured export license had the right to operate export business. Therefore, no factories producing any goods could do export business directly.

So the company where Libin was working was an exporting company. And this company was a manufacturing company operating a motor cycle factory. This was the reason why we were here to inspect the goods prior to the export business deal was concluded which was a necessary process of a business deal.

Then we went to the spot where they had the motor cycles on display for export. Then we went to see the factory where they made the motor cycles. The factory operated in eight large sheds. However, the area of the factory was more than ten square kilometers. So one had to go from one point to another by car. There were rest houses and parks for the workers at different points within the compound area of the factory. So the atmosphere of the factory seemed good.

We observed the machine-operations one by one and stage by stage. The assistant Manager of the factory was with us. He showed us around the factory. If I asked any question, reply came from Libin. When something came up which Libin did not know, then he asked the Assistant Manager.

Mostly a signal man operated a machine stooping over it. Only a few of the operators looked at us with side glances. Most of them did not care. I suddenly saw an old lady operating a lathe machine. By her physical condition, I guessed her age to be over fifty. Along side was a beautiful young girl also operating a lathe machine. Observing these two ladies, I thought this beautiful young girl will become old after some time just like this old lady hanging on this machine. It was a coincidence that Libin also was thinking in the same way as I was. When I told him about it, he said, 'Oh! how we both think the same way!'

In order to entertain my curiosity, Libin inquired the ladies in their language. We came to know that they were mother and daughter. The mother had been operating the same machine over the last twenty-five years, and the daughter for last year.

The beautiful girl must be educated. She was so beautiful that no man would let her hands go once he will grasp them. In the same manner, the machine also would not let her hands go. I felt so. My feeling touched me deep. I was a traveller. What could I say. And what could I do. I silently moved on observing next machine and the operator struggling with it.

We entered the seventh shed. Here was the section where they did the fitting of the engine to the motor cycle. This shed was better lit and cleaner than the other sheds so far we had seen. Libin said, 'This is where my sister works.'

'Oh yes! where?'

We moved on. We reached a section where they checked the motor cycles after fitting the engines. Libin's sister worked here. When we got closer to his sister Libin said something in their language. But the situation was not convenient for introduction as the Assistant Manager was with us. And she was also busy in her work. I recognized her with her appearance which took after Libin. We moved forward without exchanging a single word.

Finally, we reached the last shed where they did the fitting of the remaining parts of the motor cycles and delivered them as finished products from the factory. This shed was larger and different compared to others. With this the factory came to an end.

We then moved on to the office of the General Manager. According to the program, we were going to have our lunch here. The G.M. was waiting for us for lunch. He came out of his office to take us into his office room. On Won-Yi's asking me how did I like the factory I replied, It is good! Libin comes here just five or six times a year. So his knowledge of the factory is limited. Thus he was not able to answer all the questions about the factory.'

The lunch was a little late in coming, so we engaged ourselves in talking. In the meantime, a message came to Libin that his sister was waiting for him in the visitors' room. I came to know this when Libin said, 'Just a minute, I am going to see my sister in the visitors' room.'

I said immediately, 'My friend, may I see your sister, too? I would like to meet her.'

He could not say 'No'. We both went to the visitors' room, asking for excuse with Won-Yi. Libin's sister was waiting. Libin introduced me to his sister. Her name was Li-Shianli.

Libin and Li-Shianli kept talking for some time. What they were talking about, I did not know and did not understand. But by the study of their facial expressions one could know that the talk was emotional. Their eyes seemed to be watery. And both of them looked worried. I just sat looking at them.

Libin had two more sisters. Their father had long been dead. Now the responsibility of the two girls' education had fallen upon the shoulders of Libin and Li-Shiauli. And there were other domestic matters also that sent Libin and Li-Shiauli worrying. When I was told about this by Libin, I said, 'I have heard that there is free and compulsory education in China. Isn't it true?'

'This is only publicity,' he went on. 'There is no compulsory education. Yes, primary education is compulsory. But onward, there is no guarantee.'

Then you did graduation on your own expense? 'Definitely!' he said, 'My sister worked hard for my education. Now I have to do the same for my two sisters.'

In the meantime, we got the message that lunch was ready. We took leave of Li-Shiauli and went to the room directly where lunch was being served. All were waiting for us. No sooner had we entered the room than all took their seats around the table. Lunch was ready on the table. We had our lunch with jokes and laughter.

After lunch we went to the room of the General Manager, Mr Won-Yi. After a while, we moved on for the city of Tchung-king on time. We arrived at Tchung-king in the evening.

Libin was thinking of sending me to Uhan by the steamer on the Yangji and he himself returning to Chengdu. Later the program was changed, because there was flood on the river. So I had to go by air.

We were ready early in the morning for the airport. The flight was at 10.a.m. It took more than an hour to reach the airport. And taxis were not available here all the time. So we got out hurriedly.

We reached the airport on time. Libin had to take his train for Chengdu at 11 a.m., so we were in a hurry for the checking at the airport.

The airport was very crowded. The flights for Beijing, Shian, Ningbo and Uhan were in the morning. Moreover, the airport was not large enough. Libin, coming to me, said, 'Let's go. They are checking for the Uhan flight.'

After checking, giving me the boarding card, Libin said, 'Now you go. Do not forget. Let our friendship live long! If there is anything that I can do for you, please give me telex or a telephone call,' and shaking hands he further said, 'Now let me take leave of you!' In response, giving vent to my feelings and sentiments, I said, 'Thank you very much!' in English and 'Se Se!' in Chinese. He said 'Pu se!' and bowed his head! in response of my greeting. Moving a little distance he turned back and waved 'Bye! Bye!' and in response I waved myself 'Bye! Bye!'.

Now I was left all alone in the crowd of the airport. Sitting at one corner, I started watching every individual person of the crowd and thinking about the Chinese friends and people. Before, that is, during the nineteen-seventies, I saw all the Chinese alike and then wondered how could they be alike. But now in the decade of nineteen-eighties I could recognize and place them by their face, physique, hands and feet and by their dress and speech and know almost correctly which community they must belong to. So I was making the difference between two individuals very clear here.

While I was watching, the crowd was thinning out. The flights for Beijing and Shian had taken off. I was busy watching the crowd. I didn't see anyone around with whom I could talk or who could come into contact with me. I guessed I was the only foreigner here at this time. They announced that the flights for Ningbo and Uhan would be late. The flight for Ningbo was one hour and that of Uhan five hours late. Now I would be arriving at Uhan only in the evening.

Before the announcement of my late flight, I was not worrying. But now every minute started turning into hour. Alone in a new place, and with

language problem, now I was feeling myself very much disturbed in my mind. And I was not able to keep sitting on one chair for fifteen minutes. I tried for some time to find someone who could speak English. But I could find none. The time was dragging so painfully for me. At last the clock struck 2.p.m. making me feel better.

All the passengers felt disturbed like me. I realized how every individual suffered from the inner conflicts and uneasiness when one could not express one's idea in other language. Almost everyone around me had by now been familiar to me and I was also to them. Some among the passengers had started to take their seats nearby me. A few hours before these people were only a crowd and I was feeling lonely in that crowd like in a jungle, but now I was feeling I was with human beings.

All of a sudden, they announced the flight for Uhan had been cancelled and the next flight would be tomorrow morning at 7.a.m. Now all the passengers started stirring and moving. I found myself in a fix. Now what to do. After inquiry I came to know that there was a hotel nearby. Some of the passengers went to stay at that hotel. Some of them remained in the airport. I also spent the night at that very hotel. As there was no one in the counter who could speak English, I was in difficulty.

With varied experiences of 'the sweet' and 'bitter' facilities and problems, pleasant and unpleasant I, finally, arrived at the city of Uhan. I met Gagan at the pre-decided place. Now we went around the city of Uhan, talking about our experiences on our respective tours -Gagan about the city of Shian and me about Chengdu and Tchung-king.

The city of Uhan is situated on the banks of the Yangji river. And Uhan is the main industrial city in the Province of Huwai. The centuries old mills as well as modern factories ran here. The water-way that connected this city with Shanghai had been a factor for the development of industry of the city of Uhan.

Like in other big cities, they were building metalled roads here, too. Tree-planting had been made compulsory here. So the roads were beautiful and clean. New buildings were being built in full modern styles. And as the city was spreading out, its citizens were compelled to use bicycles as their means of transport.

Finishing our business in the city of Uhan we left for Guangzhou. This time we stayed at the Hotel Liu-hua located in front of the main railway station of Guangzhou. This hotel is of three-star standard. Not so bad.

They had no arrangement of interpreters here like in some other hotels. So we were in problem. We decided to find out our old interpreters, Chang-Sach and Liang-Lic. With this decision, we went to the Hotel Dang-

Fang. In the hotel we enquired with almost all the staff of the hotel about the interpreters, Chang-Sach and Liang-Lie, but it was all in vain. We were still trying, and looking around the lobby for about one hour. The problem here too was that of language.

We both were worried so much that we did not see any solution before us. However, we were trying to find out some solution of our problem. Troubled Gagan went from one corner of the lobby to another looking for the faces of Chang-Sach and Liang-Lie as if he was looking for something very precious he had lost. And I was busy watching the faces of the people moving in and out and working in the hotel.

Gagan came dashing to the sofa with me and said, 'Oh! I think, you have the address of Liang-Lie's boy friend, Chau-Yang. Don't you? If we could meet him, it will help.'

'You are right. Perhaps, I have his address,' I said and opening my brief case I began to search for his address. I found the card. Giving the card, I said to Gagan, 'You phone him and make enquiry about Liang-Lie!'

'All right!' he said and moved on.

Gagan contacted Chau-Yang over the phone. When he enquired about Liang-Lie and Chang-Sach, Chau-Yang refused to say anything about them over the phone. Then Gagan requested him to see us at the hotel. Chau-Yang accepted the request and said he would be coming to the hotel at 3.p.m.

We went out and strolled around the city for sometime and came back to the hotel before 3.p.m. Right at 3.p.m. Chau-Yang gave us a phone call to our room from the lobby. We requested him to come up to our room.

'Hello! Good-afternoon!,' With this greeting, Chau-Yang entered our room. We shook hands with him. Then we requested him to take his seat on the sofa. We were meeting after a long time. So we had some general conversation. Afterwards, wanting to get information about Liang-Lie, I said, 'Have you married Liang-Lie? Where is she now?'

'Yes! We got married,' he said, but said nothing further. And his cheerful face suddenly turned sad.

'Congratulations!' I said, 'When did you get married? Just then when we had met you both? Or recently? And how about children? How is her health? And where is she now?'

I put these questions to Chau-Yang one after another. And in reply to my questions he, reluctantly, said, 'She is all right.'

I was not satisfied with his reply. Moreover, he was trying to change the context of our conversation. So, turning towards Gagan, he said, 'How is

your trade going? Now China has changed much regarding trade and commerce. What is your opinion?’

‘Well! I should better say I am not satisfied rather than to say right or wrong. As they have the rules and regulations here that only certain designated and assigned companies have the right to do export and import business you got to have special permit from the central government. With all these hurdles, how can you expect to develop trade in this country?’ said Gagan.

‘What difference does it make to you?’ said Chau-Yang.

‘If export -import business are left in the hands of the producers and all the required facilities for them are provided prices of the products can be controlled, and the producers can compete in the international markets also,’ Gagan continued, ‘When the companies stand in between middle men, the prices of the products go on the increase and it creates difficulties for us.’

Though Chau-Yang had changed the context and had quite a debate with Gagan on trade and business and I was also listening to them, yet my curiosity about Liang-Lie was growing more and more. When I found that their debate was cooling down, I ventured to intervene and said, ‘Excuse me! where is Liang-Lie? May I know?’

‘Now she is working in Shenzhen,’ his face turned sad when he said this.

I now understood that he was in a big problem. I remained silent for a while. I didn’t think it right to ask any more questions about Liang-Lie at that moment.

In the meantime, Gagan said, ‘Do you know where Chang-Sach is working? Nobody here in the hotel gave us any information about her.’

‘Maybe, or they cannot,’ On saying this much Chau-Yang turned very serious, and said in under-tone, ‘It is better not to ask any question about it!’

‘What do you mean?’ said Gagan with surprise and curiosity.

‘What happened?’ I said trying to draw information from Chau-Yang, as we were so much curious for information from him about Chang-Sach. But he was not in the mood to give us information. For a while the atmosphere of the room was quiet but tense. Our curiosity was heightening.

I repeated, ‘What happened? Please tell us!’

He found it very difficult to flash out the information. Dropping his eyes, he said in an undertone, ‘Suicide!’

‘Oh’, we said, expressing our surprise.

‘Yes!’ he said, confirming what he had said.

'Why she committed suicide?', asked Gagan in an emotional tone.

'How can I say why she committed? And how she committed? But she committed anyway. It is a fact.'

'I never thought she was such a feeble-minded person.' I said, expressing my opinion.

'It is not a question of weak or strong mind. It is rather a question of time and situation.'

'What must be the reason for her to commit suicide?' said Gagan in the same emotional tone, and asked further, 'Please tell us! What was the reason?'

Whether Gagan had been attracted by Chang-Sach, whether he had begun to think about her, I never asked Gagan about it. And the matter also never figured in our talk so far. So I never asked him about it. But now the way he was taking interest in Chang-Sach, showed that there was affection growing in some corner of his heart for her.

'It is difficult to say. But she has committed suicide in the hospital.'

'In the hospital?' said Gagan again with emotion.

Observing the curiosity of Gagan, Chau-Yang said, 'If you really want to hear, I can tell you whatever information I have got.'

'All right! Go ahead!' Gagan went closer to Chau-Yang.

The very night that Chang-Sach was admitted in the hospital, she committed suicide. That day evening Liang-Lic had gone to see her. According to her version, in the morning of that day, in one of the rooms of the hotel, seven men raped her by turn under the threat of killing her. She was then taken to the hospital in unconscious condition. When she had come to sense, she told Liang-Lic crying bitterly, 'All this is the act of the Manager, Tanjun!'

But Liang-Lic said that at that time she showed no sign of committing suicide.

'How did she commit it?'

'Thrusting a knife into the abdomen! Because a knife was found lying on the palm of her right hand.'

'Can it be murder or suicide?' said Gagan doubtfully.

'I am not the authority to decide what it is. But in the report it is said that as she could not bear the incident of the rape, she committed suicide.'

'Have people believed it?'

'Who cares who believes or not? Her mother and brother were at thousands of Kilometers away. She had a boy friend. Liang-Lie says, her boy-friend was the cause behind her committing suicide.'

'Oh! Has she had a boy-friend?'

'Yes! But now no more. When the Manager Tanjun's attitude towards Chaug-Sach began to be objectionable, her boy friend had one day, entered the room of the Manager to protest it. But the boy did not come out of the room after that. The rumor is that Chaug-Sach had protested on the incident.'

This information of the incident made us sad. The atmosphere of the room itself turned to be sad and unpleasant. Actually Chau-Yang had not wanted to tell us about all these matters. I was regretting on making him tell. Gagan was worried very much. He was just keeping mum. He remained nonplussed for some time. I was also silent and thinking about Chaug-Sach. Her way of speaking, laughing, her suffering and courage! I was now feeling more unhappy and sad than Gagan.

Breaking the silence, I now wanted to switch the sad context over to a pleasant one for Chau-Yang. So I said, wanting to get information about Liang-Lie, 'After marriage, your days must have been quite happy.'

'I should say so,' when he said it, his face was clouded by sadness. And he rolled his eyes to other side. By his manners, I guessed that their married life failed to be happy.

Now only to break the silence of Gagan. I had to talk to Chau-Yang, so I said, 'Mr. Chau-Yang, If you don't mind, whether you had misunderstanding between you, I wonder. And has she left this hotel?'

'Yes! She left. I should say, because of the same incident we are talking about,' and he said further, 'After that she went to work with a Taiwanese Company. Since then the distance between us went on increasing.'

'But it was your love marriage, wasn't it? And Liang-Lie used to talk to us so much about you. And she never got tired of praising you. How has such a thing come to pass?'

'The reason of this is our poverty!' When he said this, his eyes turned to be moist. He went on, 'I am an educated man. I used to teach at a university back home. Because of my love for her, I came to Guangzhou, but now she has gone to Shenzhen.'

'Is she working at Shenzhen without your agreement?'

'Yes! My wish was to go to my home town and live there but she refused. According to the company and society she moved in, her desires went up high. And without my consent she had abortion of my three-month old baby

in a hospital. I suffered so much in my mind by this act of hers!' he stopped abruptly. I could see his troubled heart and mind manifested on his face. Heaving a long sigh, he took the hot water thermosflask and pouring it in to his cup he drank it.

According to etiquette, he should have filled our cups too with water. But he did not do so this time. I filled our cups with the hot water and began to drink.

'How often do you meet?'

'It is two months now she has not come here. Now she works in a company which has its head-office in Shenzhen itself'

'Can you give me her address?'

Chau Yang made me note her address and telephone number without any hesitation. We had to go to Shenzhen on some business. We would stay there one night, then leave for Hong Kong.

'Can't you get a job in Shenzhen? If you hold a job there, it is better for you.' I said, suggesting him.

He said laughing in a ridiculous manner, 'I could easily get a job were I a beautiful girl, but, instead, I am an honest and industrious boy.'

He was expressing himself so frankly that we were nonplussed to hear him. We came to know that Chau-Yang had been unhappy all these days. And now we were having more talks about the bad social conditions here.

In the process of our talk, Chau-Yang said, 'The social evils, that are spreading in our society in the name of civilization of the western countries, are spoiling our youths. Because of this, the present government has developed a system called the Neo-Proletarian system, or the system for the consolidation of the Chinese society, in the name of preserving Chinese Traditions, but it has been all wrong!'

I began to analyze his statements instead of passing any judgement on them as 'right' or 'wrong'!

Breaking the silence of a short while, he said, 'My friend! Let me tell you. My life is passing through the dark!' His eyes were watery. He did not want to say anything more than this and did not want to explain either why his life was dark. Saying 'life is dark' all of a sudden he embraced me and broke into weeping like a lover embracing his beloved pouring out all the pains of his heart.

A friend who used to always talk so cheerfully, now such a condition of him made me feel very sad. However, I did not venture to say anything at this moment.

The goal of Mao's Neo-Proletarianism was : One language, one speech, one nation, one breed, showing courageous feats, going on building the nation and doing away exploitation, working hard for national consolidation, making the work of the Chinese Nation well known and making life happy they build a paradise on this land of liberation.

'Despite these ideals, faults and flaws have started surfacing in the communist system,' said Chau-Yang, 'When they realize faults and flaws, they should come forward for a Change. Only replacing the persons in the system does not help. Replacement alone cannot bring about change to the system,' he further said, 'Here they throw dust into the eyes of the masses with only the replacement of people in the power!' He further went to say more excitedly, 'No one can play with the life of the millions of people for the satisfaction of their ego or for the fulfillment of their vested interests. These are the dark aspects of the present system.'

I did not show any reaction to the statements that he made so decisively, but Gagan could not remain silent. So he said, 'Mr. Chau Yang! You appear to be a politically conscious man. Why are you hanging on this petty job? Life is a flitting phenomenon. Why don't you start doing something for the Chinese people and society right at this moment?'

Perhaps, Gagan's suggestion seemed true that Chau Yang had been cherishing in his heart over a long time. Chau turned towards Gagan and said, 'Mr. Gagan, Can you help me?'

'What kind of help do you want from me?'

'Provide me a powerful dynamite! I will tie it upon my chest and explode it amid the gang of these old guys! It will certainly take one life but it will give life to the millions of Chinese Youths.'

These statements of Chau Yang sent my mind reeling. Until a moment before, I was his sympathizer, but now I began to get frightened of him with his latest statement. I, however, was yet ignorant of the casual factor which made him so fearless and detached from life. The fast Changing of the atmosphere of our room also puzzled me. It was now about evening.

I invited Chau Yang to join us for lunch which he readily accepted. We also informed the service counter of the hotel about our departure for Shenzhen by train next morning. They booked our train tickets to Shenzhen.

We phoned Liang-Lie in the presence of Chau Yang and informed her of the time of our arrival at Shenzhen. After this, all three of us went to a restaurant for dinner. We let Chau Yang choose the dishes. The dishes were of noodles and a variety of North Chinese meat dishes. Now as we were gradually becoming familiar with the provincial dialogues, thoughts as well as cuisine,

we began to like items of food traditionally prepared and eaten in different provinces of China. After dinner, we decided to part our ways with a hope of meeting again.

We prepared ourselves for our departure to Shenzhen early next morning. As the railway station was not far, we did not have to bother about finding a taxi. We arrived at the railway station fifteen minutes before the train left the platform. The train left on correct time.

Liang-Lie did come to the Shenzhen station to receive us. When we saw her, we were very happy. And she was also glad to see us. The distance between Guangzhou and Shenzhen by rail was only of two hours. So we arrived at Shenzhen at 10 O'clock in the morning.

We asked Liang-Lie to take us on a sightseeing tour around the city and the other worth visiting places there.

Liang-Lie said, 'First of all I will arrange a hotel for you. Then I will take you to Chisin-Chunghue (small China). This city is recently built. This is a special economic zone. Therefore I will take you also to some industrial centers here. How do you like the schedule?'

'All right, as you say.'

We went to the hotel by Liang-Lie's car. Making necessary arrangement for us at the hotel, she left for her office telling us she would be back after an hour.

Right after one hour, she was back in her car. Coming to us she told us about the program she had arranged. She said, 'I have arranged a program for this evening for meeting the General Manager of our company, Mr. Li-Shautong. You can talk with him on trade and business. Moreover, he has also invited you for dinner.'

'All right! What time are we leaving for the program?'

'Well! We can move now.'

We arrived at the spot of the Chishin-Chunghao where they had an exhibition going on. They had tickets of different rates for the Chinese and the foreigners. We bought two foreigners' tickets for us, Liang-Lie bought one for the Chinese.

No sooner had we entered the exhibition ground than I happened to look at the exhibit of the Potala Palace and was surprised. There were other such exhibits which gave glimpses of Tibetan culture. There were exhibits that represented the most important historical and cultural movements of China including the Great Wall. I could readily recognize most of the exhibits representing places which we had already visited. The arrangement of the

exhibition was very good and the Exhibition itself was worth visiting. It took us two hours to go around the exhibition ground.

After visiting the exhibition, we moved on to visit two industrial centers - one of silk garment industry and the other of toy industry. At 03 O'clock in the afternoon, dropping us at the hotel she said, 'Now I will come back at 05 p.m. to take you to our office. O.K.?'

'O.K.! Thank you for everything.'

We went to our hotel, had our lunch, then went to our room for rest. Right at 5 p.m. Liang-Lie arrived at the hotel and informed us from the lobby by the phone. Getting ready hurriedly we went down to the lobby.

Liang-Lie's office was on the thirty fifth story of the Foreign Trade Building. We went to Liang-Lie's office which read 'Special Economic Zone Foreign Trade Company'.

We were very much attracted by the decoration of this office. Whole of the floor and passages were floored and furnished by expensive carpets and in every room of the office the staff were busy in their respective works. We went through four office rooms and entered a room which was calm and quiet. And this room was furnished with sofa-sets all around the room. Liang-Lie told us to take our seats on the sofa and she herself went on and entered the next room.

After awhile, she came back and said, 'Just wait here for a few minutes more. Sir Li - Shautong is now in an emergency meeting. For some time he has requested you to wait here. You will excuse me!' And placing tea cups before us, requested us to take the tea.

I was thinking - How Lian-Lie could come to such a big office. And what a personality Li-Shautong must be. And what an important function of this office might be, and so on.

Fifteen minutes! Twenty minutes! Twenty five minutes! We did not yet receive any call from the G.M.'s Office. Liang-Lie kept coming and going now and then. We began to feel bored. After half an hour, Liang-Lie came with man to take us to the G.M.'s office. The gentleman said respectfully, 'Pardon me, it is a big late!' Now we four persons entered the room.

As soon as we entered the room, the General Manager got up from his seat and came to us to shake hands. It took no time for us to recognize the man who for us was a very well-known face. He also recognized us readily. As we were well-known friends already, the G.M. kept shaking hands for quite a while.

Manager Li-Shautong, requesting us to take our seats on the sofa, said, 'When Liang-Lie told me that two foreign businessmen would like to meet me,

men I had you in my mind, but in somewhat hazy way. Anyway, you are my well-known friends. And I am very happy to meet you!

'Since when are you working here, Mr. Li?'

'It is about two years now.'

'How is your trade here?'

'Very good! It is the only Free Economic Zone Office in China. This is on the experiential stage now. This office alone carries out business deal worth three million US Dollars per month.'

Gagan and me were struck dumb by what Li-Shautong told us. Liang-Lie put tea cups before us. Li-Shautong, stretching his right hand towards me, said, 'Now, tell me how is your business going on?'

Before I said anything, he continued, 'Please tell me if there is anything that I can do for you.'

Before Gagan or I myself said anything, he said again, 'You are my guests now. Your hotel bill here shall be paid by my office. You can stay as long as you like.'

For the cordiality that Li-Shautong showed towards us, I thanked him with 'se-se!' ('Thank you!' in Chinese).

As we could talk freely and frankly, our talk began in a pleasant atmosphere. He asked us so many questions-putting questions upon questions - that we had to answer them somehow or the other. Our talk continued about an hour. Then we moved on to a restaurant for dinner.

Li-Shautong told his secretary to carry the hand-set phone that was on his table. We five, including Mr. Chu, the secretary, went down by the elevator.

Mr. Chu brought a car where we were standing. It was a car made by the Ford Company of America. It was an eight cylinder, soundless car. Mr. Chu was on the steering, Liang-Lie sat in front, we three sat in the back. It was so comfortable that, I think, I had never taken a ride in such a comfortable car. It was difficult for me to make a difference whether we were in a moving room from where we were inspecting the city or in a car.

Now and then there were telephone calls in the hand set. Mr. Chu took the hand set with one hand, the steering with the other. Mr. Chu passed the phone call to manager Li-Shautong only when the reply had to be decisive 'Yes' or 'No'. Manager Li spoke a few words then gave the set back to Mr. Chu.

Now we arrived at a grand restaurant - the Shanghai restaurant. In this restaurant, they served Shanghai cuisine prepared by the Shanghai cooks and

served by the Shanghai lady attendants. The shapely and tall girls from Shanghai were so beautiful that they looked like fairies. And their smiling added more 'light' to the light of the restaurant.

Dishes arrived on the table. I had to go on nature's call. I enquired Mr. Chu for toilet. He took me to the toilet. I came out of the toilet and washed my hands on the basin. One young man in uniform handed me a towel when I came out, Mr. Chu gave the boy ten yuans as a tip. I was shocked. I was feeling inferiority, because I had used the toilet. So I should have given the tip, not Mr. Chu. Feeling odd, I said, 'I would have given the tip myself.'

Dishes were set on the table. Looking at the expensive dishes on the table, I thought Li-Shautong welcomed us whole-heartedly. After dinner came the bill. The bill was twenty-two hundred yuans. Li-Shautong signed it and, taking out a hundred yuans currency note from his pocket, gave it along the bill to the attending girl. Then all of us got up. All the staff who were around there, greeted Li-Shautong smiling and bowing their heads as if he were a prince of a petty state. Observing all this I felt bad.

I was thinking - what sort of special economic zone China is going to build up. And I was unable to see through it. The new government that was established following the revolt against capitalism under the leadership of the proletariat is now breeding and new-aristocracy and a neo-class of wealthy people made me worried. I moved on silently.

Gagan was engaged in conversation with Li-Shautong. I could hear their conversation clearly. Li-Shautong was posted here by Chen-Guo-Qing. Not only that the office of Special Economic Zone itself was created for him to give him a job. Li-Shautong himself told Gagan about it.

I was not surprised at all on the episode behind Li-Shautong's present position. It was not that yesterday's driver should not become a General Manager of a company today. What was making me feel sad and sorry was that they were neglecting the able men like Chau Yang of Guangzhou and Li bin of Chaugdu. Men were holding high posts not by their merits and abilities developed in themselves with perseverance, but were planted by people with source and force. If such a man turned out one day another Taujun, it would not be a surprise at all.

I could feel quite a change in the manners of Li-Shautong. He had been given the rights to indulge in collecting and spending money. And I could see clearly that he was growing into a luxury loving bureaucrat in his mentality and manners. This was the way that a society became a breeding ground of the exploiters and the bourgeoisie.

Turning towards me, Li-Shautong said, 'How long will you be here?'

'Well, we are leaving tomorrow,' I said.

'Are you not on a business trip here?'

'Yes! But we have finished it already. And now we are on our way back home.'

Manager Li informed us that Mr. Chu and Liang-Lie, educated as they were, have been very helpful to Li. This he told us when I asked him whether he faced difficulties in handling foreign trade.

Dropping us at the gate of our hotel, Li-Shautong said, 'When you come here next time, come with a long program. What time you are leaving for the station tomorrow? Liang-Lie will take you to the station by car.'

'Yes, we are leaving tomorrow early in the morning at six O'clock.'

'OK! Liang-Lie will come at six. Good-bye! See you again!'

'Good-bye! Thank you very much for everything.'

Finishing with the packing, we went to bed. I woke up earlier. I looked out. It was still dark: I opened the window. The morning breeze gently blew into our room. I was busy observing the scenery outside. All were sleeping. There were no activities. With my observation, I began to think 'Are the citizens of this city lazy? Are they cowards? Or tired of their works? Otherwise why are they not waking up? Look! It is dawn. The Eastern sky is glowing with red light! But these people are still sleeping.'

I was still on my observation. The city was now splashed with the morning sunlight. I woke up Gagan and told him to be ready. Liang-Lie arrived at right time. She took us to the Lowu railway station which is on the border between Hong Kong and China. I had no intention to tell anything about her miserable husband, Chau Yang. Now in the process of seeing us off, she said, shaking hands, 'Did you know that Chang - Sach has committed suicide?'

'Yes! We came to know!'

'How did you come to know?'

'Chau Yang told us about it!'

'Oh! Did you see him also?' she stopped and did say nothing more. It was not our business to poke into their private affairs. So we said nothing either. Liang-Lie was waving us Good-bye. And we were moving forward to cross the border of China.

SRI JAGADGURU VISHNUPADHYA
JNANA SIMHASANA JNANAMANDIR
LIBRARY

langamawadi Math, Varanasi

CC-0. langamawadi Math Collection, Varanasi. An eGangotri Initiative







Bhagat Jangam is a renowned modern novelist hailing from Bhaktapur a small city in the valley of Kathmandu. Mr. Jangam proved his talent as a novelist by writing a novel "Kalo Surya" in Nepali but for its commendable thoughts and lucid style it has been translated into different languages like English, Hindi, Japanese, Russian and Chinese within a short time. Mr. Jangam has done an extensive tour in different parts of the world. A humanist at heart, Mr. Jangam wields his pen with revolutionary zeal. For democratic right and human values, he is extremely dedicated.

INDU KRES V



In the end, I wonder whether the novelist has any message for his readers. The subtle hint I for one have been able to deduce is that the first flush of victory and exultation brought about by China's 1949 revolution may prove to be after all short-lived and ageold historical conditions and deeply ingrained habits of thought may prompt that society to move one day in a different direction, along the path of ancient wisdom as dictated by the principles of non-violence, fellow feeling and good neighbourliness.

Rishikesh Shaha

The earth and all its resources should be nobody's monopoly. It must be shared by all and should belong to all. Therefore individual ownership of capital should be put to an end, and the system of collective ownership or the state ownership should be established. And all should be given equal rights and opportunities to enjoy the available wealth of a given state.
This is the only cardinal truth.

- From this book